

# Developing a Potential Youth Festival Model to Aid and Develop the Theatre for Young People Industry in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the phenomena of *theatrical events* and *festivalisations*, specifically aimed at young people. Various methodologies on *theatrical events* and *festivalisation* are integrated into a devised model. The devised model offers a clear and comprehensive understanding of the numerous processes and structures that play significant roles in the production and experience of a *theatrical event* or *festival*. The devised model is utilised to investigate and analyse the trends and practices of Theatre for Young People internationally (specifically Australia) and locally. The devised model allows the study to highlight certain strengths, opportunities, challenges and shortcomings of the different industries. Through comparing the local trends and practices with those of the international Theatre for Young People industries, areas of development are identified. Finally, the study develops a model that can be implemented into the South African environment, and highlights specific challenges and areas that should be developed in order to create a thriving and sustainable Theatre for Young People industry in South Africa. It is evident that South Africa's support structures differ significantly from those of other countries where Theatre for Young People industries flourish. This has caused Theatre for Young People practitioners to adopt a predominantly didactic approach to producing events for young people. The study found that, in order to create a thriving Theatre for Young People industry, a balance between the educational and entertainment values of Theatre for Young People should be maintained.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het ten doel om die verskynsel van die teatrale gebeurtenisse (*theatrical events*) en verfeesteliking (*festivalisations*) wat spesifiek op jong mense gemik is, te ondersoek. Verskeie metodes van teaterale gebeurtenisse en verfeesteliking word in 'n ontwerpmodel geïntegreer. Die ontwerpmodel bied 'n duidelike en omvattende begrip van die talle prosesse en strukture wat 'n belangrike rol speel in die produksie en ervaring van 'n teatergebeurtenis of fees. Die ontwerpmodel is gebruik om die tendense en praktyke van Teater vir Jongmense op sowel internasionale (spesifiek Australië) as plaaslike vlak te ondersoek en te ontleed. Die ontwerpmodel laat die studie toe om sekere sterkpunte, geleenthede, uitdagings en tekortkominge van die onderskeie bedrywe te belig. Areas van ontwikkeling vir die plaaslike bedryf word geïdentifiseer deur plaaslike tendense en praktyke met dié van die internasionale Teater vir Jongmense-bedryf te vergelyk. Ten slotte; ontwikkel die studie 'n model wat in die Suid-Afrikaanse omgewing geïmplementeer kan word. Die model beklemtoon spesifieke uitdagings en gebiede wat verder ontwikkel moet word om ten einde 'n vooruitstrewende en volhoubare Teater vir Jongmense in Suid-Afrika te skep. Dit is duidelik dat Suid-Afrika se ondersteuningstrukture aansienlik verskil van dié van ander lande met 'n bloeiende Teater vir Jongmense-bedryf. Die verskil veroorsaak dat Teater vir Jongmense-praktisyns 'n oorwegend didaktiese benadering tot die daarstel van gebeurlikhede vir jong mense volg. Die studie het bevind dat, ten einde 'n vooruitstrewende Teater vir Jongmense-bedryf te produseer 'n balans tussen die opvoedkundige- en vermaaklikheids waardes van Teater vir Jongmense moet gehandhaaf word.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCING THE STUDY**

#### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

Young and aspiring theatre makers in South Africa inherently face unique political, socio-economic and cultural challenges to create performances. After the 1994 elections South Africa experienced drastic transformations in every area of life, “including arts and culture..., [and] theatre makers [have had] to adapt, as new or altered trends have developed in production, funding, and management systems” (Van Heerden 2008: 8-9). The constant political, socio-economical and cultural shifts over the past two decades have generated a less than ideal situation for practitioners across the board. The theatre industry has “become a totally free-lance area, it’s become a totally self-generating thing, where you have to make work for yourself” (Hauptfleisch in Solberg 2003: 45). The environment in which theatre practitioners, and especially youth theatre practitioners, have to produce events, poses many challenges which they have to overcome in order to produce an event.

In the light of previous research done by South African authors, such as Louis Pretorius (2008), Pieter Venter (2007) and Margot Wood (2005), it is evident that there is a great lack of purely entertaining live performative arts events specially created for the youth market within the Western Cape region. Even though the Theatre for Children and Young People “industry is very much alive and well in many countries around the world”, in South Africa it unfortunately is far from mature (Pretorius 2008: 72). Considering that the youth can, and hopefully will, be our future audience members and participants in theatrical events and festivals, their artistic and cultural improvement forms a crucial part in keeping the very important cultural activity of the performative arts alive. As an aspirant theatre maker, I deem the development of youth audiences a priority.

Theatre has the capacity to transform reality, to create new worlds. It is a powerful artistic channel to elicit feelings of fear and pity, laughter, anger and happiness. It is, therefore, worth probing the inner structures of the mechanism that arouses these profound emotions and what can be properly devised in theatre for young people to help in its struggle for a rightful status in society and a rightful status in the inner hierarchy of the theatre world. (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 172)

I wish to explore the youth theatre industry in the Western Cape in search of a way to attract youth audiences to theatrical events, thus exposing them to this magnificent medium.

## **1.2. PRELIMINARY STUDY**

Theatre for Young People (TYP) is a global phenomenon which has become part of the many debates surrounding Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Theatre for Children and Young People is an extensive performative art form, and can be broadly defined as “professional theatre targeted at children and young people, up to the age of 25” (Australia Council 2003: 13). The Australian government splits Theatre for Children and Young People into two categories: work for children refers to any work for those up to 12, and work for young people usually refers to work intended for 13 – 25 years-olds. The ‘young people’ bracket is then subdivided into teenagers (13 – 18) and young adults (19 – 25). This study will primarily focus on Theatre for Young People initiatives aimed at teenagers.

TYP upholds itself as “a unique form of art, with its own set of rules and conceptions, [which] should be constantly cultivated” (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199). Schonmann argues that the TYP genre “should develop its own characteristics [and] aesthetic language, and invent its own artistic forms to create meaning and excitement” (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 177). On a global scale TYP is flourishing owing to devoted practitioners and other stakeholders supporting and developing this unique art form. Yet, TYP practitioners are constantly in an uphill battle to uplift the

status regarding “the legitimacy of the form and its funding” (Pretorius 2008: 72), and have to convince “agents, diffusers and producers of their economic and social value” (Schneider in Schneider & Mack 2005: 37). It seems apparent that, without proper funding structures, TYP will struggle to develop, but this claim must, however, be verified through research.

TYP practitioners and governments of countries such as Australia, various countries in Europe and the United Kingdom, understand the importance of TYP and the positive impact it has on a country’s socio-economical and cultural well-being. Australia’s government policies, for instance, supports TYP through, firstly, recognising “the importance of Theatre for Children and Young People ...; and, secondly, [through] specific funding [grants] (or other forms of financial support) for this sector of the performing arts” (Pretorius 2008: 17). Yet it should be noted that

[t]here is, of course, no guarantee that a favourable government policy will lead to widespread production of theatre for young people, as there are many other factors that contribute to the existence of TYP. But judging by the proliferation of TYP in the above-mentioned countries, it certainly lends a helping hand. (Pretorius 2008: 20)

Regardless of all the socio-economic and political challenges that practitioners have to overcome, it is obvious that “platforms for [international TYP] companies to exhibit their work are available and have led to innovative and ground-breaking work” (Pretorius 2008: 72).

The most prominent platform is a festival created with young people as the target audience. Due to its polysystemic nature, it enables the integration of the various performative elements associated with Theatre for Children and Young People in one event. This research therefore initially seeks to investigate and analyse a festival in the Western Cape exclusively aimed at young people as is the case in other countries such as Australia and Europe. The cultural and socio-economical achievements attained by other countries hosting festivals aimed at the youth, are legion. It therefore is very disconcerting that no such festival is to be found in the Western Cape and that no youth

festival in South Africa utilises the integrating principles of the boutique festival model<sup>1</sup>. This research has to seek and investigate other artistic mediums available to young people in South Africa. First it must be mentioned that there is an on-going debate within the Theatre for Children and Young People industry about the balance between education versus entertainment in youth performances. Schonmann argues that

[c]hildren's theatre should be regarded as a unique semiotic art phenomenon .... [I]t is part of the theatrical system and a part of the educational system, and it has to maintain a very delicate balance between them; it must consider artistic and aesthetic qualities, as well as pedagogic understanding" (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 175).

Furthermore, as stated earlier, Theatre for Young People is a distinctive genre with its own trends and practices which should be developed continuously. It is not simply a mixture of theatre and education (edutainment), but an intricate and indivisible entity (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199):

Theatre for Young People must be conducted in accordance with and between the courses of theatre and education. Yet, at the same time, it should create from them both a substantive, artistic entity, in which theatre and education are wholly united from within. Education is not an external shell of an artistic core, nor should the art of theatre become in any way purely instrumental. The key to creating a system of forms, organised in a meaningful way for children, is not a series of questions relating to the connection between the play's content (the educational aspect) and its form (the theatrical aspect) but, rather, questions relating to the connection between form and meaning (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199).

The polysystemic nature of a festival is able to integrate and maintain the 'delicate balance' between the theatrical system and the educational system and is the reason why this form of TYP is such a success.

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<sup>1</sup> The organisers of boutique festivals use a range of processes to ensure that young participants have a sense of ownership of the festival. These concepts are discussed in full in Chapter 4.



My preliminary research found that there are three dominant forms of TYP available for the majority of young people in South Africa. First, there are Educational theatre mediums such as Theatre –in Education (TIE) and/or Drama in Education (DIE) which has “become part of the South African educational system, both as theatre studies, as practical drama work for the student, and with drama as a methodological device” (Solberg 2003: 13). These forms are not only utilised by professional practitioners, but also by tertiary institutes, such as the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University, as forms of training for DIE and TIE practitioners, and as a means of connecting with the community. The unfortunate dilemma with these forms is that “the locus of power resides with the educational function of theatre and not with its entertainment function” (Pretorius 2008: 11). This results in theatre being perceived as a more didactic medium by young people and will thus not be chosen as an entertaining activity, which is not what this research is [primarily] searching for (Pretorius 2008: 11).

Secondly, there are professional theatre companies, such as the Theatre for Life Trust and the Cape Heart Community and Educational Theatre, that undertake in-school tours (and workshops) all around the country. In many aspects these NGOs come close to maintaining the delicate balance between education and entertainment. The issue, though, with this form of TYP is that “[s]chool agendas dominate virtually every aspect of professional TYA<sup>2</sup> companies, including: the subject matter, length, and style of the plays presented; production calendars and seasons, and the very organisational and economic structures of some theatres” (Bedard 2005: 47 – 48). Most of the companies in South Africa do theatre performances that supplement the educational curriculum for subjects such as Dramatic Arts, English and Afrikaans, and perform the plays that are part of the curriculum. In Australia, for instance, TYP companies have certain philosophical underpinnings gained from experiencing young people’s aversion towards the DIE and TIE forms. Performances aimed at young people at the many festivals hosted across the country, are another example along the same line. These performances can also be dominated by the ideologies of the adults involved in producing them – a phenomenon that will be explored in this study.

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<sup>2</sup> TYA or Theatre for Young Audiences is a term used instead of Theatre for Young People or TYP.

Lastly, the youth are able to take part in a variety of drama and theatre competitions as representatives of their schools. Through attending<sup>3</sup> and participating<sup>4</sup> in these competitions, I have become aware of the fact this form of performance focuses highly on achievement, and because of its prestigious nature, is not an ideal concept. “It is [the] overemphasis on the finished product that results in many school play productions turning into nightmare experiences for all involved” (Wood 2005: 65).

Theatre is shaped and influenced by the environment in which it is created, because of “regional differences in philosophy, social and political circumstances, resources, backgrounds and motivations” of practitioners and possible stakeholders (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 173). The cultural context within which Theatre for Young People in South Africa has to function, is not very favourable, especially not when compared with the socio-economical structures in place for international TYP practitioners and companies to utilise. This is a disappointing factor which is fuelled by a lack of focus in and proper execution of government policies and funding structures, which are currently being aimed at “broader social development” and not the commercial expansion of TYP locally (Pretorius 2008: 30). The National Arts Council (NAC), for instance, does not specify theatre in their funding policy and mainly focuses on promoting the “creation, teaching and dissemination of literature, oral history and storytelling, music, dance, musical theatre, opera, photography, design, visual art and craft” (Republic of South Africa, Department of Arts and Culture 1996 Online). This is not a negative point *per se*, but inhibits the vast opportunities TYP is able to deliver. In the light of the challenges TYP practitioners have to face in South Africa, I believe that practitioners have been given a fertile breeding ground in which it is possible to cultivate new ‘characteristics, aesthetic language’ and ‘artistic forms’ – yet there is still much to be done in order to see the youth theatre industry fully mature in South Africa.

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<sup>3</sup> For research purposes I attended rehearsals at various high schools in Stellenbosch, as well as the competitions in which the plays and their participants were involved.

<sup>4</sup> In high school I participated in as many theatre and drama activities as possible.

### 1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem seems to lie not only with the current policies instated by the government, but also with the attitudes and beliefs – or rather identities – of current theatre practitioners. The attitude of many young theatre makers is that the TYP industry is just a gateway to the professional circuit. Other possible stakeholders, such as private funding bodies, also need to be convinced that such an event can be lucrative, which is immaterial, for the development of young people should not primarily be considered for economical gain, but for the possible outcome it can have for the future of the arts and the socio-economical development of and bridging in our culturally divided country.

I do not believe this change will happen unless TYP practitioners take action, for government (occupied with other social and economical concerns) or other stakeholders will certainly not consider youth audience development as a primary objective. The change therefore needs to happen first and foremost within the industry itself; and it does seem as if some initiatives to introduce youth audience and talent development into their programmes, have been rolled out by festivals. The problem remains that in the Western Cape there is no festival exclusively aimed at young people as a form and choice of entertainment. Thus TYP practitioners need to find a way to utilise their restrictive circumstances in order to create such a festival. This paper seeks to identify possible opportunities that practitioners can capitalise on.

Internationally the Theatre for Young People industry is growing and expanding its horizons – festivals are hosted and events are created for a market of young people with particular needs and qualities. In South Africa the situation is a bit more disheartening, due to various socio-economic, political and cultural imbalances and challenges in our country. Previous research has shown that the value and viability that young audiences have for the South African performative arts industry as a sustainable and lucrative market, are being undermined, underestimated and neglected by government and other stakeholders. These socio-political factors are all inhibiting motivated TYP practitioners to organise performances for young people, and are contributing to the fact that most

TYP productions are “sanitised, ‘dumbed down’ and overly didactic” (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 71). This is greatly weakening the status of TYP and the opportunities and possibilities it holds for all its participants as well as for the performative arts industry as a whole. It is a great pity, considering the fact that “artistic standards are in the making in child audiences”. The proper execution of a performative arts programme for teenagers, which “consider[s] artistic and aesthetic qualities, as well as pedagogic understanding” and maintains the delicate balance between the theatrical system and the educational system, can be a great boost to the TYP industry in South Africa (Ward 1939: 174) (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 175). Fact remains that TYP can enable audience and talent development; and yields opportunities for educational, practical and social development and advancement for all participating – not to forget its job-creating possibilities.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The cultural, socio-economical and geo-political environment of South Africa produces unique challenges for TYP practitioners to overcome in order to produce high-quality performances. This study explores the various processes and structures in place and the current state they are in and poses questions that arise when the South African context is scrutinised: What forms of TYP are available for young people? What are the challenges that local TYP practitioners face and is it possible to create TYP of high quality under these conditions? What determines and constitutes a performance of high quality for young people? Who are the people responsible for producing and sustaining a quality TYP industry? In what form should TYP in South Africa be presented so that it is both entertaining and educational for its target audience? All these questions seem to culminate into the main question this paper seeks to answer: Is it possible that a festival exclusively aimed at young people can fulfil both educational and entertainment needs, as well as enable the TYP industry to wholly mature? A related question: What possibilities, opportunities and values can an event or festival aimed at young people have for a South African society?

In order to answer these questions, various aims have been identified for the study. This research firstly seeks to examine the theoretical models concerned with theatrical events and festivalisation. Through utilising a devised model comprising different methodologies, a thorough investigative framework can be established on the various processes and societal structures which influence any performance. This, in turn, enables the study to identify the elements associated with high-quality performances and how they function.

In addition, the study seeks to identify the various practical predicaments TYP practitioners have to face. By pinpointing certain problem areas that exist within our society and the TYP industry's structures, and comparing them to international issues (which have been dealt with), it is possible to reveal processes, trends, practices and structures that can be put into practice locally.

Finally, by integrating the findings within the devised theoretical framework of festivalisation, a festival model and approach can be formulated that could be implemented by practitioners in order to support and develop the TYP market into a sustainable – even lucrative – entity which complements youth audience development in South Africa.

## **1.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method this study follows, is a qualitative literature study on the subject of theatrical events and festivals, as well as the TYP phenomenon locally and internationally. Fieldwork was done to supplement the research and deepen understanding of the different forms of TYP available for young people in the Western Cape Province; various TYP events in the Western Cape Province were attended. The fieldwork also included content analysis of these events as well as informal discussions with festival stakeholders. The study furthermore makes use of a comparative framework, mostly theoretical, to evaluate local TYP practices in relation with selected international TYP trends. The findings are integrated within a conceptually devised

framework of festivalisation in order to generate a possible approach, or an *a priori* approach for TYP practitioners to produce events aimed at young people in South Africa.

## 1.6. DEMARCATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study primarily utilises a theoretical framework to investigate and analyse youth festivals in Australia and the TYP industry in the Western Cape Province in South Africa. The theories devised by the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR) on theatrical events and festivalisation, act as the theoretical basis of this study. An integrated framework of the various methodologies aids in thoroughly investigating the cultural context within which TYP is produced and experienced in the Western Cape. The predominantly qualitative research is utilised to finally develop an approach to producing a youth festival in South Africa.

The study is divided into three parts. The first part is concerns the theoretical foundations of *theatrical event* and *festivalisation* (investigated and discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). The second part consists of case studies investigating and comparing international (specifically Australian) and local TYP trends and practices (discussed in Chapters 4 and 5). The third part comprises a festival model, proposed to be utilised by TYP practitioners locally (Chapter 6).

Chapters 2 and 3 investigate the appropriate theories and frameworks of *theatrical event* and *festivalisation*. A devised model is formed with which I investigate, examine and analyse TYP practices nationally and internationally. This model is also employed in the final chapter to assist in proposing a possible approach for producing TYP in South Africa.

In order to understand the inner workings of such an event and the influence it has on all its participants, this study had to mostly search for literature studies outside the South African context. Chapter 4 investigates the current state of TYP on a global scale to highlight certain traditions that have been sustained, and identifies emerging festival

trends and practices. Chapter 5 evaluates the TYP industry in South Africa and makes use of a comparative framework in relation to successful TYP companies and their practices. By comparing the international trends with the scarcity of literature studies and performative events available in South Africa, the shortcomings of the South African TYP industry are highlighted. This is not to scrutinise or judge the events organised in our own country, but to consider what possible actions can be taken by practitioners in South Africa to develop and expand our TYP industry and stimulate the interests of South African youths to attend an event organised for them. Chapter 6, in light of the various findings in Chapters 4 and 5, utilises the conceptual model in chapters 2 and 3 to propose a possible approach for producing a festival specifically aimed at young people. This festival model would, in turn, promote youth audience development and participation in the organisational processes of an event for teenagers, as well as maintain the delicate balance between education and entertainment.

Chapter 7 concludes with the findings that came to light in comparing the TYP industry in the Western Cape with that of international standards, it deduces that there are numerous challenges that need to be faced. The chapter furthermore identifies certain shortcomings of this research paper and makes recommendations to future researchers.

## **1.7. CONCLUSION**

Festivals can be distinguished as events that offer a great variety of arts to choose from and enjoy. In the Western Cape there is no such event for young people to benefit from, yet in the greater South Africa there are instances of events that lean towards the highly acclaimed festivals found in Australia and Europe. Unfortunately none of the South African events seem to come close to the magnitude of youth festivals hosted in other countries, and have no major impact on trends and practices as festivals such as the OUT OF THE BOX and Stage X festivals of Australia have had. The paper seeks to identify possible avenues that TYP practitioners in the Western Cape can take in order to further develop the TYP industry through means of hosting a youth festival.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE THEATRICAL EVENT

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of people watching other people perform (be it ritualistic, educational, entertaining or any other form of performance) has been part of human interaction for millennia. The performing arts in particular have evolved and changed and come in an abundant variety of forms within contemporary society, and with content covering every aspect of human existence. The experience created within this given environment of performance has undergone a great amount of scrutiny in scholarly debates. A great deal of varying theoretical approaches and frameworks have been generated, equipping researchers to investigate, analyse and interpret the vast number of processes involved in performance. In order to give this study a theoretical focus, the premises of the *theatrical event* and *festivalisation* – developed by the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) working group – are used to investigate and analyse the Theatre for Young People (TYP) trends and practices and the performances that are generated both abroad and in South Africa. It is apparent that TYP in South Africa holds a low status in society, which perhaps accounts for the fact that so little research (in comparison with international trends) has been conducted in the field. This, of course, is not the only problem. The primary focus of this investigation is to identify the societal challenges that TYP practitioners face in South Africa, and establish how the socio-economic, geo-political and cultural structures that are in place, can be optimised in order to create a festival of high quality that appeals to and attracts young audiences.

Willmar Sauter's (2004) model of a theatrical event is the predominant framework utilised throughout this paper, yet methodologies generated by other theoreticians, such as Hans van Maanen<sup>5</sup> (2004) and Peter Eversmann<sup>6</sup> (2004), will be utilised to supplement

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<sup>5</sup> Van Maanen presents “a basic reference text that attempts to identify in an abstract and systematic way the contextual layers, their main factors, interrelationships and, equally important, their possible significance for the actual theatrical event” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 240).



Sauter's open-ended model. These various theoretical models and concepts which define the theatrical event, bear remarkable resemblance to one another, despite differences in approach and terminology used by theoreticians. Evidently, through an immersed framework, one can specify more elements which directly and indirectly influence theatrical communication before, during and after an event.

This study firstly seeks to establish the processes and structures at play during a single theatrical event and what the experience is for participants during the time and space it is produced, as a festival is a meta-event, or constituted out of various individual events. In other words the individual events are "organised and presented within the bigger structure of the festival" (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 28). Thus the arrangement of the entire spectrum of activities creates a different experience from that of a single theatrical event (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 28). This is not only because of the fact that festivals are composed of various independent yet comprehensible performances, "but also because the makers of the single events, the performances, remain responsible for the separate individual works" (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 28). Emphasis is placed on the importance of a single theatrical performance within a festival structure, and this is why the structures and processes that pertain to the production of a theatrical event are investigated.

There are many aspects of the theatrical event that apply to the festival. Both the theatrical event and festival happenings occur within a specific cultural context which cannot be added from the outside; and this will be explored as well (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 18). The cultural context or what Bennett (1990) refers to as the outer frame of a theatrical event and a festival, do not differ much though and the concept will only be fully discussed in Chapter 3. In the light of the aspect above, the polysystemic nature of a festival, it is clear that an investigation into theatrical events is necessary to better understand the structure and processes of a festival. I follow Susan Bennett's "model of the audience's experience of theatre" which consists of an inner and

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<sup>6</sup> Eversmann aims "to describe the theatrical experience of spectators (both during and after the show) as a form of an aesthetic experience that can take place in multiple dimensions ... and whereby the balancing of skills and challenges within these dimensions plays an important role" (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 136).

outer frame to systematically introduce the processes and structures that shape a theatrical event.

The outer frame is concerned with theatre as cultural construct through the idea of the theatrical event, the selection of material for production, and the audience's definitions and expectations of a performance (Bennett 1990: 1-2).

This outer frame which “contains all [the] cultural elements which create and inform the theatrical event” significantly correlates to various aspects of the dimensions in Sauter's model of the theatrical event (Bennett 1990: 149). “The inner frame contains the dramatic production in a particular playing space (...) and, in particular, the spectator's experience of a fictional stage world (Bennett 1990: 149 & 2). The inner frame, furthermore, “encompasses production strategies, ideological overcoding, and the material conditions of performance (Bennett 1990: 2). These elements are also found in the *theatrical playing* and *playing culture* dimensions of Sauter's model. Bennett notes that the audiences' role within theatrical communication is actualised in these two frames, but fundamentally at the points where these frames overlap (Bennett 1990: 149). It is the interaction between stage and auditorium as well as amongst audience members which forms production and reception processes, and which gives rise to the convergence of all the elements of a theatrical event. The unification of these elements, or the areas where they overlap, generates a particular experience – whether it is defined by Sauter's dimensions or Bennett's frames it does not matter – it is important to identify where and how these overlaps influence each other.

This chapter, however, solely focuses on the inner frame, as the major differences between theatrical events and festivals occur within the playing culture and theatrical playing dimensions.

Before I continue, I wish to expand on one of the features of a theatrical event and the proposition that a

[t]heatrical event as a concept builds on the assumption that theatrical activities are a form of playing, shared with many other forms of playing, and functioning

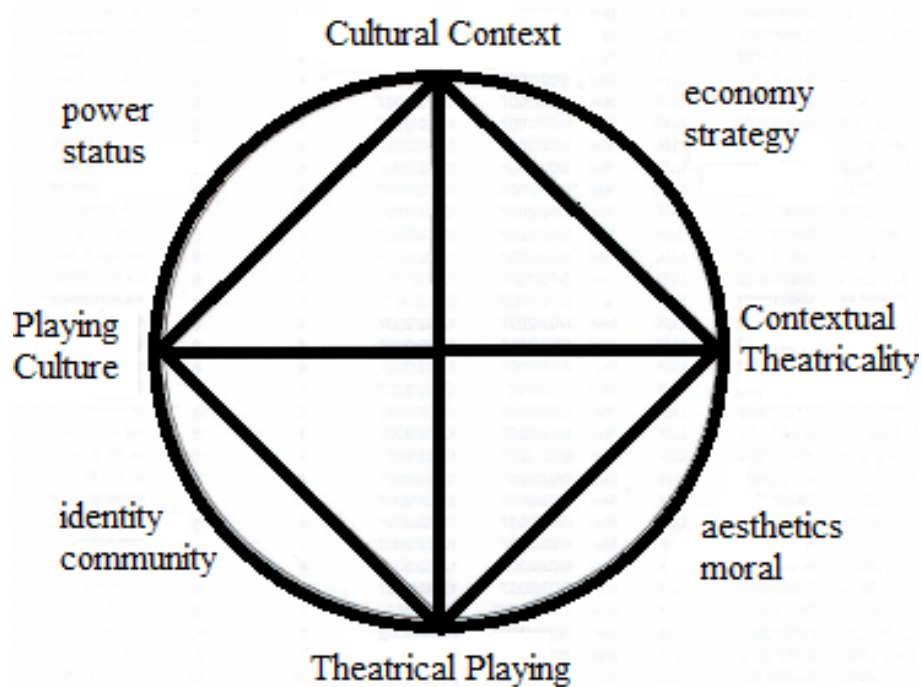
within this particular framework. In a way, it is the most general aspect of theatrical events (Sauter 2008: 21).

The notion of playing, seen “as practice among children and adults, but also as [a] theoretical and philosophical phenomenon”, is a fundamental principle that occurs in all the processes involved in creating a theatrical event (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 12). Playing is strongly related to the concepts of theatrical playing and playing culture which I apply in investigating the elements involved in the experience of a theatrical event. The idea of “[p]laying emphasises the here-and-now character, [and] its presence in time and space”; and this component is highlighted within playing culture of a theatrical event (Sauter 2008: 17). It is the playing culture of theatrical events which “unites [performers and spectators] as two indispensable partners of the theatrical event”, constantly at ‘play’ during a specific time and space via a communicative interaction “which occurs on several levels” (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 4 and Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). Inevitably the conditions under which this form of playing takes place, will determine the quality of the experience for either party. The needs of potential audience members must be understood by practitioners, as they emerge “as tangibly active creator[s] of the theatrical event; thus by understanding the experience they undergo during a performance, attention is drawn to possible practical approaches. The significance of positioning the audience as contributors to planning and producing the festival experience is thoroughly explored in Chapter 4.

## **2.2. THE THEATRICAL EVENT**

Sauter distinguishes four dimensions “which are present every time a theatrical event takes place”. They are: *theatrical playing*, *playing culture*, *cultural context* and *contextual theatricality* (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 11). Together they form a “circular terminology” which enables one to reveal where the various processes and structures of the theatrical event overlap, and how they influence one another at these overlaps, be it before, during or after the theatrical event (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 11). Sauter’s methodology makes it possible to investigate the impact and influence a

theatrical event exerts upon the structures and processes of the society in which it takes place and vice versa. The figure below is an advanced version of Sauter's theory, and illustrates the overlaps and the manner in which all the dimensions influence one another (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 216). Notably, in between the various dimensions there are specific basic aspects that pertain to the relationship between the two respective dimensions. These aspects and their importance and influence on the theatrical event (and festival) will be discussed throughout the study.



**Figure 2.1: Expanded Model of the Theatrical Event**

Hans van Maanen alternatively distinguishes between a *communicative*, an *organisational*, a *societal* and an *institutional* frame which, on the other hand, represent “the ways in which theatrical events are influenced by their [socio-economic, geo-political and cultural] contexts and not the other way around” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 247). As noted “[a] theatrical event does not happen in a vacuum, but is closely related to such factors as aesthetics, the economy, education, attitudes, status traditions, etc.” and the ways these aspects affect one another needs careful consideration

(Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 19). Integrating these frameworks will enable this researcher to identify in more detail what the “long-term influences and short-term effects” are on and of a theatrical event, and will act as the basis for the extended framework of festivalisation in Chapter 3 (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 247 and Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 19).

### **2.2.1 Theoretical Foundations of the Theatrical Event**

In the light of recent theoretical developments of the theatrical event, along with advancement of performance analysis, two seemingly different “lines of interest” in scholarly theory, debates and practices have been formed (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 14). Willmar Sauter distinguishes them as

an older tradition which concentrated upon the creative process of production and thus focused on the director; and a later development which centred around the aesthetic experience and included a spectator (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 14).

Both these lines of interest are of utmost importance in defining how the various processes involved in creating a theatrical event impact one another other before, during and after a performance.

It is evident that “the interaction between performer and spectator – or rather between the stage and auditorium – represent[s] the nucleus of the theatrical event” (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 11). The process of production and reception takes place simultaneously between performer(s)<sup>7</sup> and spectator(s), and brings the production of meaning to life. This concurrent experience is one of the aspects which separate the performing arts from other creative disciplines<sup>8</sup>. The process of theatrical communication is of cardinal importance during a performance, as a theatrical event cannot completely subsist without production of meaning taking place. The communicative frame

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<sup>7</sup> Performers in this sense include the director, playwright, technical crew and any other people involved in the creative process of a performance.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Eversmann discerns four features that distinguish “theatre from other disciplines”. They are ‘the transitive nature of the performing arts’, the ‘collectivity of production and reception’, ‘multimediality’ and ‘ostension’ (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004). Yet these features “should [not] be considered as an absolute or essential characteristic of theatre, but rather as aspects that play important roles in production and reception” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 141).

consists of the systems of perception *shared* by the (...) performers and spectators, (...) [and] these perception systems condition the theatrical communication; moreover, the relation between both, albeit in a resembling sense or in a differing sense, determines the nature of communication in a more specific way (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243).

What becomes clear is that production and reception processes cannot actually separated and a vital field for investigation would be “the relationship between the two for specific cultural environments, for specific types of theatre (Bennett 1990: 114).

This study considers the socio-political, geo-economical and cultural contexts in which these two parties meet to fully comprehend all the aspects that impact and influence the process of theatrical communication. For

the concept ‘theatrical event’ (...) places the study of the contextual relationship firmly in the centre of attention, so to speak, because the occurrence of something, in this case theatre, is essentially an activity that relates to its environment (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 239).

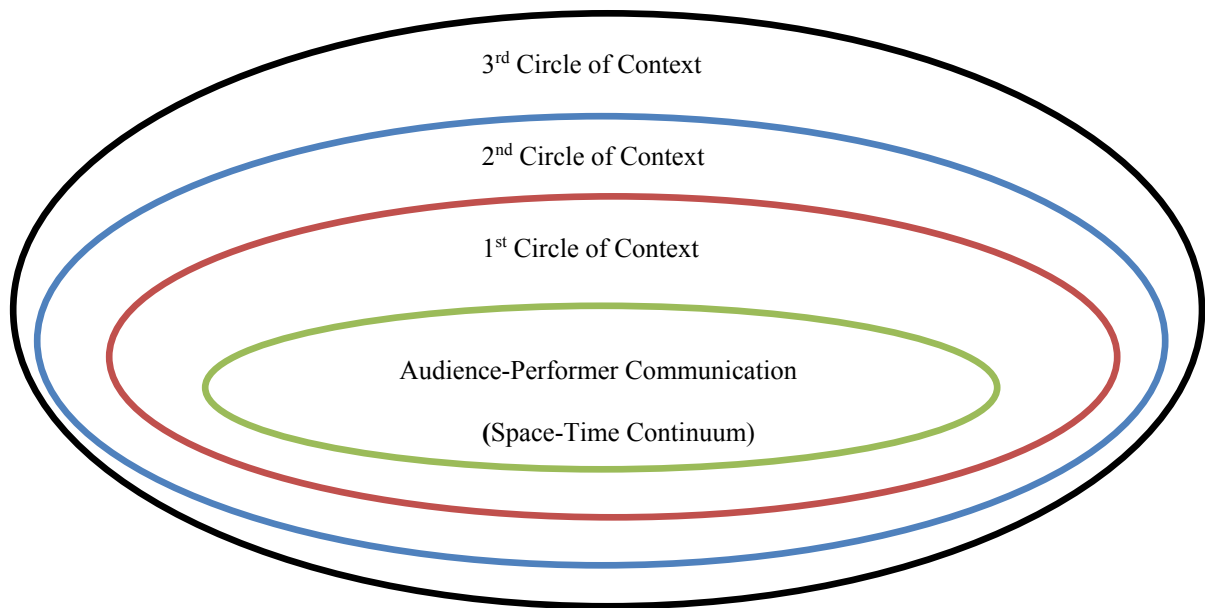
Thus the perception systems of practitioners and the audience are influenced by the socio-political, geo-economic and cultural contexts, or what Bennett refers to as the outer frame. Therefore the production of meaning during an event, along with the direct and indirect societal influences and occurrences (or societal context), inevitably shapes theatrical communication during a performance, for both artists and audience members are influenced by it.

In order to represent the large variety of direct and indirect circumstances upon which a theatrical event is constructed within any given society, I employ a modified model of Van Maanen’s ‘Framing the Theatrical Event’ (2004). The devised model<sup>9</sup> below is a condensed representation of Van Maanen’s “abstract and systematic” theory, which seeks to discern “the contextual layers, their main factors, interrelationships and, equally

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<sup>9</sup> The model presented here is a unified version of two models devised by Van Maanen and found in Martin, Seffrin & Wissler (2004). It includes aspects of Van Maanen’s ‘Schema for Theatrical Eventness’ model.

important, their possible significance for the actual theatrical event” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 240). Figure 2.2 plainly “represents how the Theatrical Event is constructed” within any given society (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 99).



**Figure 2.2: A Schema for Theatrical Eventness**

The core of the model symbolises the performance-audience communication or the production of meaning. Here “we see the importance of the act of communication between the performance and the audience, as well as the performance space” (Martin in Cremona et al. 2004: 1). Organisers seeking to create TYP need to ensure that the content and form of the communication taking place, as well as the space in which it takes place, correlate with the needs and desires of the young participants. In an overly didactic environment, where adult perspectives and beliefs override the theatrical experience, it can become challenging to maintain the focus and interest of young people. In Australia the overly didactic forms of TYP had died out by the late 1980s and the government effectively started supporting the creation of theatre for theatre’s sake instead of allowing it to be a “servant of the education system” (Mack in Schneider & Mack 2007: 88 – 89). South Africa still needs a shift in ideology, one that can balance the educational and entertainment values of TYP. There are, of course, a few isolated examples of TYP

performances in South Africa that are both educational and entertaining, such as the teenage cabaret *Gly* which was specially commissioned by a local festival. The communicative frame of this particular performance was arguably on a par with the needs, desires and trends of youth culture of the time, and added to its success. The praise that various teenagers gave the cabaret during informal discussions while I was attending the festival made this evident – as *Gly* was one of their favourite performances of that year.

Seeing that theatrical events “cannot exist without a context”, this schema adequately includes three more contexts within which the processes of production of meaning are situated and helps portray “immediate as well as (...) remote circumstances” under which the production of meaning during events take place<sup>10</sup> (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 99/100). Van Maanen adds that “each frame organises specific aspects which play a part in the occurrence of theatrical events, although the next frame includes and determines the former one(s) for a part” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 246). The First Circle of Context is interrelated with the core and is associated with the specific background of the audience and theatre makers, and highlights their production and perception strategies. This is affected by the importance of the experience which the audience has of different theatre and other aesthetic worlds, shown as the Second Circle of Context (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 100) (Martin in Cremona et al. 2004: 1-2).

Clearly theatre in contemporary society has to compete with a multitude of other creative art forms, as well as new media, in order to appeal to and attract audiences. Organisers and practitioners of TYP are especially challenged to create performances and experiences for an ever-changing demography. Arguably, as a result of the bombardment of new media and other entertainment forms such as television, game consoles, cell phones etc., modern-day young people have less developed theatrical perception skills than in previous generations. A new approach therefore needs to be implemented in order to ensure that the theatrical performances for young people appeal to them, and that they

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<sup>10</sup> This concept relates to Bennett’s inner and outer frames.



can identify with and interpret them. Organisers of youth festivals in Australia have developed an approach which thoroughly integrates young people in the creative processes of producing a performance and which seems to be a very effective way of engaging with young people. An in-depth discussion of this method follows in Chapter 4.

The Third Circle of Context deals with “the ‘real’ world in which we find the political, economic, judicial and ideological worlds” which determine and “give rise to the theatrical event” (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 100) (Martin in Cremona et al. 2004: 2). Evidently TYP cannot function properly without the financial support from government and other possible stakeholders. TYP is a theatrical form that is primarily concerned with involving young people in creative experiences, rather than financial viability. If the South African government were to adapt their funding policies in order to support the creation and sustainability of a respectable TYP industry, practitioners will be able to develop a TYP industry that can balance educational and entertainment values. It is in the hands of TYP organisers and practitioners to put in motion this ideological shift. The performances they produce, inevitably reflect the potential of TYP and the social, political, economical and cultural benefits that it creates. It is proposed that a successful festival for young people will be able to enhance the benefits of a single performance; South Africa, however, is being deprived of the multitude of benefits that can arise from such a festival. On the other hand practitioners might need to find ways to work within the current financial constraints and is something this research seeks to identify.

Inevitably, the conditions under which this form of performative playing takes place, will determine the quality of the experience for either party. The remotest circumstances, from government policies and stakeholder ideologies to the space in which the event takes place, need to be carefully considered. The needs of potential audience members, in this case young people in high school, must be understood by practitioners, especially in relation to young people, for they emerge “as tangibly active creator[s] of the theatrical event” (Bennett 1990: 10). Thus by understanding the experience audience members have during a performance, attention can be drawn to possible practical approaches that can be utilised in order to create a meaningful experience.

### 2.2.2 Conceptualising the Experience of a Single Theatrical Performance

Despite the differences in terminology and methodology used by scholars about the processes taking place between the stage and the auditorium, they coherently divide the experience of theatrical communication into different aspects and/or segments to effect a better understanding of the experience. It is very difficult to “formulate any general laws or fundamental characteristics” about theatrical experience that apply to all theatrical events, for, evidently, the experience of a work of art is a very personal matter and differs considerably for individual participants of a theatrical event (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 139). Yet there is one feature of the theatrical experience that appears in many, if not all, theories: “the accounts by individuals of how they experienced moments of significance in the theatre” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 139). This idea is based on Eversmann’s approach which is developed from ideas formulated by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson in their study *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter* (1990). The ostensible ‘peak-experience’ relates to audience members being entirely concentrated and focused on the stage with, which makes for performances that are “highly valued by the individual” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 139). Considering the similitude about this experience amongst participants, Eversmann states that “[t]he conditions that trigger this experience (and hence the *content* of the experience) differ from individual to individual, but the *structure* of the experience seems highly comparable” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 139-140). Thus by using the concepts, which pertain to the here-and-now experience of theatre, developed by Eversmann and Sauter as well as Van Maanen’s Communicative frame, I wish to gain “greater insight into the structure of the aesthetic experience: the dimensions, the form and the quality of the interaction between [the] onlooker and [the] work of art” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 140). It will, hopefully, highlight how a TYP practitioner can approach creating an event of high quality for young people.

Before an in-depth discussion of the theatrical experience can be launched, this study needs to, firstly, recognise where various art forms are similar or different and, secondly, identify the traits and activities that relate to the aesthetic experience of a theatrical event

– the theatrical experience being a particular form of *aesthetic experience* with unique features (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 140). Theoreticians have found that there are four features “generally acknowledged (...) to be key criteria in distinguishing theatre from other disciplines” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 141). The first two criteria are valid for all performing arts: 1) the *transitive nature* of the performative arts which implies that it only occurs for a certain duration of time; and 2) the *collectivity of production and reception* which deals with the people involved on both sides of production and reception (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 141-142). Significantly different experiences occur between various events and festivals due to the changing nature of these two criteria; The management models and target audience of a more traditional theatrical event, for instance, differ from the way in which theatrical events for young people are produced and experienced.

The features “multimediality and the principle of ostension (iconicity)” are more specific characteristics of theatre. The former encompasses the diverse sign systems in performances; while the latter deals with the fact that “the story on stage is not told but shown and the audience looks directly at the action” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 142-143). Theatre practitioners need to constantly bear this in mind when working with different target audiences and the various ways in which they interpret and experience performances. It should be noted that “these four [features] should [not] be considered an absolute or essential characteristic of theatre, but rather as aspects that play important roles in production and reception” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 141). With these aspects in mind, a discussion of the various methodologies dealing with the different characteristics of theatrical communication, now follows.

Sauter’s *Theatrical Playing* dimension divides the concrete experience that occurs between performers and spectators into three levels – the sensory, artistic and symbolic levels of communication (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 22). Considerable agreement exists between Eversmann’s and Sauter’s segmentation of theatrical communication, “especially given that all of [Sauter’s] levels are connected with Eversmann’s fourth dimension: communication” (Tulloch in Cremona et al. 2004: 177). It is during this communicative encounter that a performer’s personality is exhibited, artistic proficiency

is displayed and a figurative personage, reaching the audience via the various levels of communication, is created (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). A combined model of these theories brings to light the features of theatrical communication and the various factors that influence practitioners as well as audience members. This is the fundamental aspect that can make or break a theatrical event for young people, for if they are unable to relate to what is being communicated on stage, they could lose interest and as a result the entire theatrical communication will break down, as the performance does not entirely subsist without the active contribution and involvement of performers as well as spectators. This notion of theatrical communication is elaborated as we investigate the theories of *theatrical event*.

Eversmann, on the other hand, distinguishes four dimensions utilised by spectators during the reception process of a performance to be able to identify and relate to the multitude of signs being communicated from the stage:

- a) A perceptual dimension which deals with aspects such as composition, structure, form, balance, proportions, harmony, colours, etc.
- b) A cognitive (intellectual) approach which concentrates on what might be termed the more theoretical and art-historical aspects of the work of art.
- c) An emotional response which emphasises the emotions expressed by the work of art, and personal, subjective, associations (interpretations, evaluations) when contemplating the work.
- d) A communicative dimension where the art object is now seen as a means to interact with the artist and/or culture according to which the object was created. This dimension also incorporates the use of the work of art as a means to engage in a dialogue with oneself. Finally, references to transcendental experiences also fall under this heading

(Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 146).

Van Maanen proposes that “spectators are forced to activate perception schemes” in order to interpret and produce meaning from a performance (Van Maanen in Cremona et al 2004: 254). The four perception schemes “are active and linked to each other within the communicative frame”, and supplement Sauter’s aspect of theatrical playing. They are:

- a) Perception schemes concerning theatrical conventions.
- b) Perception schemes concerning theatrical and other languages.
- c) Perception schemes concerning the aesthetic processing of themes.
- d) Imagination schemes

(Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 255).

Sauter's definitions describe the mutual act of communication between the stage and auditorium; Eversmann's input mostly reveals the means with which audience members deal with the great amount of information coming from a performance; and the distinctions made by Van Maanen adds perspective to the influence practitioners' choices have on the production and reception processes. A summary of these assorted definitions follows, with Sauter's levels of communication acting as the basis to highlight the multitude of processes audience members go through to interpret and perceive stimuli from the stage. Consequently all these processes work in accordance with one another to evoke a meaningful experience for spectators. Youth theatre and festival organisers need to be aware of these aspects and how their product will impact these various levels of communication. The messages coming from the performance or event need to be identifiable and appealing to its young target market.

The sensory level of communication is a very important element in the communicative process, as it is what audience members initially use for production of meaning at the beginning of a play. The "different senses (...) are stimulated and activated at the same time", spectators immediately react to and interpret the direct impulses coming from the stage (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 152). Spectators also often experience kinetic responses which occur in other forms of art as well, but are particularly prevalent when watching live performances – spectators can "involuntarily 'mimic' the expressions (...), postures and movements of an actor" (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 152). The stimulation of the senses is very important for theatrical communication, for if the "performance is not able to attract my attention, so that I look and watch attentively, the whole communication breaks down" (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 10). This reveals that one of the most primary ways in which spectators identify with and experience a performance, is a physical one; this is, however, only the tip of the iceberg. Identification

with a performer or performance is critical to the success of a theatrical event. If the performance does not succeed to do this in an aesthetic manner, there is always the pleasure of cognitively engaging with the performance that could enable identification. It therefore seems arguable that, because of socio-cultural differences, a different approach is needed to produce an aesthetically and cognitively stimulating experience for young audiences than when creating work for an adult audience. According to Richer quoted in Seffrin (2006)

young people are equipped with the skills to deconstruct and aesthetically respond to popular culture forms [and ...] over the past few decades, young people have challenged some of the dominant values that previously determined what is good and what is bad art. Popular culture responds to this challenge by mainstreaming young people's inventions, initiatives and innovations (Richer quoted in Seffrin 2006: 119).

Clearly TYP practitioners need to use different methods to be able to adapt with the changing nature of youth culture in order to maintain interest and stimulate artistic and socio-cultural needs. Careful consideration also needs to be made for the various ways in which different young people experience and perceive performances, as the teenager demographic in South Africa is extremely diverse. This is something that the polysystemic nature of festivals might be able to overcome as it offers participants the opportunity to choose from various performances which could appeal to their specific needs for entertainment.

The artistic level of communication is related to theatre as “a cultural process, man-made, artificial” entity and is associated with the “general stylistic features of certain genres, regional or international conventions, shifting ideals of delivery, as well as personal ways of expression used by the individual performer[s]” (Martin in Cremona et al. 2004: 1 and Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 10). Van Maanen mentions that

[t]heatrical conventions are historically grown and institutionally supported concepts of play, performance, actors, space, time and audience relationships, which have taken the form of views in the minds of spectators and in this way become active in [their] perception schemes (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 255).

Therefore the methods utilised by TYP practitioners need to be appropriate to the environment in which the event or festival is held.

It is appropriate to briefly present a perhaps coincidental similarity between what Sauter designates as skills and style – two conditions that differentiate theatrical events from religious and daily occurrences – and Eversmann’s concept of skills and challenges<sup>11</sup> which are “necessary [for] the aesthetic encounter at a theatrical event” (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 6 and Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 161). It seems obvious then that a spectator’s “[c]ognitive aspects and (pre)knowledge of the world and the theatre” ... play an important role in the experience of theatre” and “enable people to ‘consume’ arts works” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 152) (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 258). According to Bennett “an appreciative, knowledgeable audience” supports a performance of ‘better’ quality (Bennett 1990: 162). Furthermore, spectators can extract more pleasure from a performance when they can recognise the various theatrical conventions “and their skilful fulfilment, as well as certain personal transgressions”, that are at play during the performance (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 10). Van Maanen so accurately articulates the relevance of spectators possessing some theatrical knowledge:

As far as this [recognition of skills] influences participation in theatrical events, not only the capacity in specific languages is important, but as a basis for that, also a general or more detailed knowledge of matters of which performances make their own perceptions and, just as much, a certain command of languages used in real life of a community to express experiences and knowledge (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 257).

The power that practitioners’ choices have in relation to *mise-en-scène* which will certainly regulate the processes of theatrical communication to a large extent, becomes very clear through these definitions. The perception schemes devised by Van Maanen exactly reveal that practitioners are able to ‘play’ “with theatrical conventions [which]

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<sup>11</sup> Eversmann’s definitions concern the audience and the necessary *skills* they require to interpret and understand theatrical performances which *challenge* their reception processes.

not only [change] and [detail] the frame of conventions necessary for an adequate theatrical communication, but also the fact that it at the same time has to challenge the perception system of the spectators” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 256). Sauter found that “the evaluation of a performance is directly proportional to the appreciation of the acting”, and, according to Eversmann, “the spectator obviously feels the need to integrate all the aspects (synchronically or diachronically) into a coherent whole [and]... [w]hen this harmony is achieved, when the skill matches the challenge”, a peak-experience will occur (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 163).

It seems that with more knowledge of the various theories and concepts involved in various forms of performing arts, it is arguable that this knowledge can improve the possibility for a spectator to have a *peak-experience*. It could even help young people interpret signifiers, as well as enhance their understanding of the experiences they have during more sophisticated forms of art, such as theatre of the absurd, or abstract concepts or dance. However, this is not a prerequisite to having a *peak-experience*, as there are many ways in which to interpret a performance, and to identify with content and enjoy its form.

There is a constant oscillation between the sensory stimulation, the aesthetic processing and the spectators’ emotional response to a performance. According to Eversmann the emotional reaction to stage actions is “[p]erhaps even more important than the cognitive operations (...) in the theatre”, for it can enable a higher understanding of identification and the Aristotelian concept of catharsis. He continues by claiming that for “most respondents (...) the emotional experience precedes the cognitive (...) and is, at least during the performance, more important than the intellectual dimension” (Eversman in Cremona et al. 2004: 155). The emotional responses that audience members have, are closely linked to identifying with the fictional content of a performance, and their ‘interest’ is what Csikszentmihalyi’s and Robinson’s research identifies as one of the most valued emotions (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 155). This has a strong connection with the ‘flow’ experience which “accounts for the sustained investment of attention during a performance” and is of utmost importance for a performance to be considered of high quality by young people (Evesmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 155).



Flow forms the foundation for the emotional experience that is most valued by audience members – the *peak-experience* – when they lose themselves within the fictional presentation on stage (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 155). This is the experience which should be sought by theatre practitioners, for when they are able to evoke a peak-experience, it is inevitable that other powerful and encouraging feelings will rise to the surface (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 155). This is what makes a performance meaningful for audience members, and leaves them wanting more and makes them return to the theatre.

The theatrical event is, of course, not always only about positive emotions; during the theatrical peak-experience there is a notion of referring to negative emotions as well, “feelings of confusion and irritation” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 156). Yet when a true peak-experience takes place, the “negative feelings are recoded: they lead to better insights and hence to a more valuable experience” (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 155). It is through evoking emotions that a practitioner can thoroughly communicate with young audiences and lead them to a better understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. The peak-experience element is even further emphasised during a festival and will be discussed in the following chapter.

All of the above-mentioned aspects are triangulated in the final, symbolic level of communication which “unites the presentation on stage with the response in the auditorium”; and here “every element of the performance can thus be a source of communication with the spectator” (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 10) (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 157). Here the bridging between theatrical playing and the playing culture of a theatrical event can be noticed. The most basic form of communication occurs with the performers and, through the use of all the communicative tools and imaginative processes, audience members can transfer “concrete stage actions into symbolic actions, executed by – likewise imagined – fictional characters” (Sauter in Cremona et al. 2004: 10).

It is apparent that the most basic form of communication that occurs during a performance for an audience member, is with the “actors on stage”, and it is this “live presence of the actor” which many respondents emphasise as “the essential formative element of theatre, [and it is this] indispensable human factor that accounts for the very special attraction [towards] this art form (Eversmann in Cremona et al. 2004: 157). Clearly a performance stimulated various reactions, yet the spectator’s attribution of meaning and value shapes the experience of a cultural product, and TYP practitioners need to carefully consider the spectator’s aesthetic and cultural needs in order to create an event that will appeal to the youth for which they try to cater (Bennett 1990: 167). The boutique festival model discussed in chapter 4 offers a possible answer to gaining this insight.

Finally, there are two essential features of the theatrical playing and playing culture dimensions which need to be mentioned in order to understand the influential potential of a performance. The concepts of *liminal* or *liminoid*<sup>12</sup> and *communitas*, as developed by Victor Turner, are vital to understand the transformational possibilities of performances and the processes that spectators can undergo during a performance. It is evident that some performances and the participants of these performances (spectators and performers) can be placed in and be a part of a liminal or liminoid state, and that these conditions can also determine the function of the performance (Du Preez 2007: 171). For example rite of passage rituals purposely create liminal conditions in order to guide young initiates into manhood. Liminal conditions can thus serve didactic purposes as well be the setting where knowledge, values and understanding can be imparted to young participants. Liminal and liminoid conditions can also evoke a feeling of unity amongst a group of people which is known as *communitas*.

In relation to creating TYP, these concepts bring important notions to surface. Firstly, in order to bring forth social transformation, it is essential to create a group feeling or *communitas* amongst young people during a performance or festival within a multi-cultural society. Secondly, through the state of liminality, the performance can break

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<sup>12</sup> The concept of liminality was first developed by Arnold van Gennep in his studies about rites of passage.

down the social structures “that hold people apart, define their differences, and constrain their actions” (Turner 1974: 47). The liminal stands “in contrast to the mundane that is already fixed in structure; [it] is seemingly unlimited in its potential for creativity and innovation” (Van Heerden 2009: 19). Turner argues that a liminal environment is a “realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise”, which is a vital part of producing innovative and appealing TYP (Turner 1967: 97). Liminality is a broad phenomenon and essentially occurs within any “condition outside or on the peripheries of everyday life” (Turner 1974: 47). Thus the notion can be extended to the concepts of festivals and theatrical events, and related to the peak-experience participants can have during a performance. It emphasises spectators’ meaningful experiences and the transformation they can experience. During a festival this experience spills out of the confines of a single performance space and into the entire festival space, allowing for more time to undergo a peak-experience while choosing to participate. Turner states that in a liminal space “people are allowed to think about how they think, about the terms in which they conduct their thinking, or to feel about how they feel in daily life” (Turner 1969: 22). It generates “free-thinking, self-questioning, self-discovery and reflexivity”, and enables participants “to develop freer and deeper understandings of the system from which they have been removed” (Van Heerden 2009: 19). Encouraging and enabling feedback from participants during and/or after a theatrical event or festival should enable practitioners to come to a deeper understanding of the influence and experience that participants have had.

Because of the multi-faceted nature of youth culture and the fact that young people maintain a lower status in society, it is essential to create *communitas* amongst young people participating in theatrical events or festivals. By breaking down this standard social order, a performance or festival can produce a liminal space where a feeling of unity or *communitas* can be created and established within a society (Du Preez 2007: 179). *Communitas* can transcend “all socially imposed distinctions between people such as rank, age, kinship position or gender, so that they are able to unselfconsciously and directly relate to one another on an equal footing” (Van Heerden 2009: 24). Over the years Turner defined the phenomenon of *communitas* in many ways: as an imperative and inclusive human bond “without which there could be no society”; as the unwavering,

instantaneous and absolute clash of identities, enabling those experiencing it to think of mankind as a uniform, amorphous and liberated community; as a collectiveness of feeling and as “true fellowship, or agape, or spontaneous, altruistic love” (Turner 1969: 97; Turner 1974: 169; Turner and Turner 1978: 13; Turner 1992: 33). *Communitas* can be one of the building blocks of culture and tradition within a society whereby social structures can be constructed (Du Preez 2007: 181).

Theatrical events and festival can cultivate a sense of belonging; essentially festivals are “prime devices for promoting social cohesion and integrating individuals into society or a group, and retaining them as members through shared, reinforcing performance” (Nygren in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 279). The fact is that globally festivals put the feeling of unity amongst participants on a pedestal. The integrative or community-building characteristic is regularly emphasised and the “coalescence of community” is seen as one of the most traditional purposes of festivalisation (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 67). Clearly the festival as a ‘community affair’ therefore needs to “attain an increased importance at times when a blurring of boundaries challenges the perceived community coherence” (Van Heerden 2009: 21). The feeling of *communitas* within and during the liminal phases of a festival thus becomes an important aspect to consider when producing an event for young people. Consequently the *communitas* generated by young people will differ significantly from that of other social groups, as youth culture is extremely heterogeneous and constantly shifting, producing a rather contested concept. Ultimately it seems that the polysystemic nature of a festival will be able to sustain the feeling of unity amongst young participants better than a single performance.

## 2.3 CONCLUSION

Youth audiences might not be consciously aware of all the immediate and remote circumstances that influence their reception during a performance, yet it should be considered by the theatre-maker in full. Understanding these aspects and the various ways in which they manifest and occur, assists in developing the comprehensive model in Chapter 6 on what methods need to be utilised when creating an event for young people.

The above insights furthermore enable a basic view of the various theatrical factors and challenges that TYP practitioners need to address in order to produce a space in which spectators can have peak-experiences. The aesthetic, artistic and cultural needs of a youth audience, and how the everyday societal influences in their lives contribute to their theatrical experience, need to be carefully considered.

The illustration below depicts the devised model based on Sauter's and Van Maanen's methodologies and reveals the multifaceted nature of theatrical events. The various circles of context in Figure 2.2 have been further developed into 'frames', which will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter. The figure below (Figure 2.3) is introduced in order to ease reading and understanding of the integration of these methodologies in the next chapter.

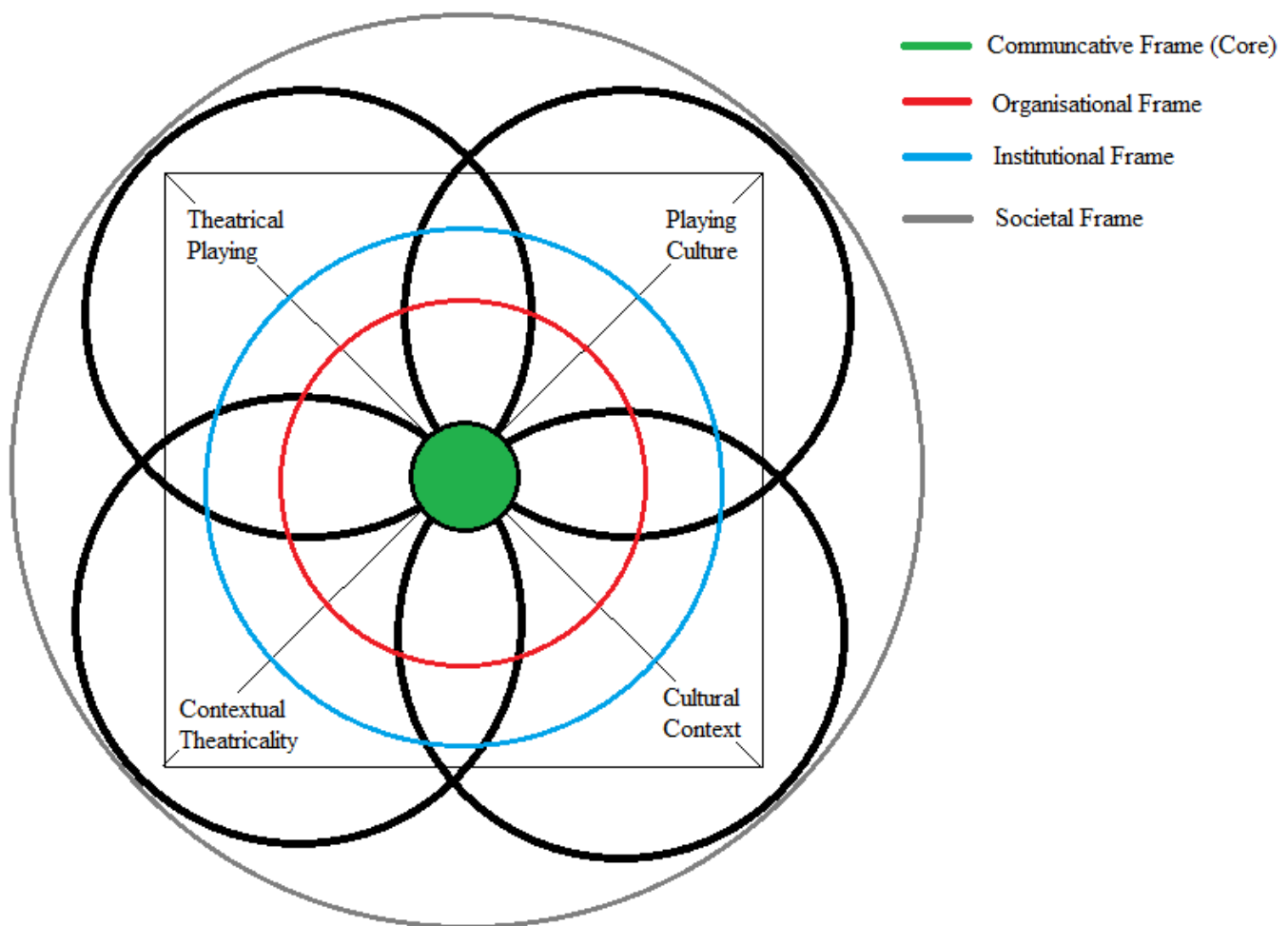


Figure 2.3: A Devised 'Flower' Model of Theatrical Events.

All the facets in this model contribute to the creation of TYP, and organisers and practitioners need to be thoroughly aware of the influences that the various dimensions and frames have on the performance. Ultimately with in-depth knowledge of these notions it is arguable that organisers can create an event that brings forth *peak-experiences* and *communitas* with more ease.

The next chapter will extend these concepts into the festival framework in order to establish the nature of the festival experience. The experience during a theatrical event is different from that of a festival, predominantly due to the varying use of space and time. This chapter considered what aspects shape the experience of a theatrical event, seeing as a festival is made up of various singular performances. This will allow for a deeper understanding of the processes involved in ensuring that a flow experience is achieved during a festival. The most prominent element for both the festival and theatrical event is the relationship between performers and spectators or organisers and participants, as the symbiosis between these two elements is what ultimately forms the experience. If organisers fail in facilitating a peak-experience for audiences in either a theatrical event or festival, it is arguable that they will see no value or meaning in coming back for more.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **FESTIVAL and FESTIVALISATION – Creating an Investigative Framework**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

The investigative framework of this study seeks to examine the structures and processes involved in producing a festival which could promote youth audience development and expand the TYP industry in South Africa. It is a fact that “arts festivals (...) are a major component of [a country’s] cultural development” and that “festivals have become a prominent, if not dominating, feature of theatre in South Africa” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 1) (Hauptfleisch 2006: 182). Arguably, the young people of South Africa are being deprived of the numerous possibilities that accompany an arts festival. There are many examples of single performative events in which young people can participate outside the festival framework: from theatre companies producing in-school performances to drama competitions and school plays. There is no doubt that these forms of performances promote youth audience development to an extent, but I consider the idea of a festival to be more appealing for young audiences’ needs and preferences.

The crucial characteristics of an event that seeks to draw the attention of new audiences clearly need to give “people an experience that inspires, moves or challenges them”; it should turn “a single encounter into a long-term affair” by “giving them something they did not have before” (Hassan in Robertson & Frew 2009: 4). Furthermore, to ensure the success of audience development, practitioners must be willing “to try new approaches and undertake innovative advertising, (...) and [be] committed to working beyond the usual channels of conventional arts marketing” (Robertson & Frew 2009: 17). This is something sadly lacking in South African TYP trends and practices.

The composition of a festival naturally offers a youth audience more choices, as well as aesthetic, cognitive and cultural stimulation, than what a single performance can offer. The primary principle of a festival that could act as a very influential aspect to produce

interest and appeal amongst young people, is its polysystemic nature. A festival offers organisers the opportunity of immense diversification of content and form, – a vital factor within a multicultural society like ours. According to Hauptfleisch (2006: 195)

[t]he polysystemic nature of the festival experience seems to be a crucial factor in the festivalisation process and its impact on South African theatre and culture. This is useful in understanding not only the hybrid nature of contemporary festivals, but also some of the difficulties which face any attempt to utilise the festival circuit or a specific festival for a socio-cultural purpose of any kind.

The suitable execution of a festival that appeals to the needs and desires of its target audience, should ensure participation. The polysystemic nature of a festival seems to be an appropriate way to appeal to the multi-faceted trends of youth culture.

A festival of outstanding quality could not only aid youth audience development, but also have a cultural, economical, social and political impact on the society in which it takes place. The establishment of a prominent youth festival in South Africa should be seriously considered, for, through participating in “art, culture and everyday life (...), [the youth] can promote their artistic-aesthetic activity, develop [their] powers of perception, strengthen their faculty of judgment and encourage them to become active members of society” (Schneider in Schneider & Mack 2007: 158). The broadened framework of a festival allows more socio-economic, geo-political and cultural opportunities to be sustained. A discussion of this broadened framework follows.

### **3.2. FROM THEATRICAL EVENTS TO FESTIVALISATION**

The most prominent similarity between festivals and theatrical events is their collaborative nature which is “exemplified in the case of the festival” and is often “referred to as collective or corporate authorship” (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 101). A festival is built on various theatrical systems (or theatrical events), each with its own “critical and artistic assumptions, values, criteria, and the like”, which all coexist and take place at different times or even, in some instances, simultaneously (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 28). The concept of “[s]uch an integrating



principle is of great help to evoke the feeling that we are dealing with a recognisable identity at the level of festival as ‘meta-event’” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 28). This responsibility of “bringing together [a] collection of separate works” lies with the organisers of a festival; the “individuals responsible for the single events need not be aware that they are brought together in a new overall structure”, but if they are – for instance when they are involved in the developing stages of a festival – it can contribute greatly to the overall identity of a festival and notion of coherence and collective consciousness of participants (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29). A great example of enabling this sense of *communitas* is the Stage X festival in Australia<sup>13</sup>. The organisers of this festival rigorously researched the youth target market and also made use of consultation processes during the generative phases of the festival. The success of a festival depends on how practitioners and possible stakeholders “deal with the many-faceted layers of production” and how the whole festival is eventually laid together (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 101).

The figure below illustrates the polysystemic nature of a festival based on the devised ‘flower’ model. A festival is made up of various theatrical events occurring simultaneously at and in various space-time continuums as illustrated in Figure 2.2. Each of the flowers in the model depicts a theatrical event taking place, and together these single events create a larger communicative frame that, in essence, creates the overall festival experience.

Festivals and theatrical events are theoretically based on the same principles: the remote organisational, institutional and societal frames that impact and influence the immediate communicative processes, are the same. Sauter’s theoretical model enables one to draw these similarities between what can be constituted as a theatrical event and a festival. Festivals broaden and develop the perimeters of a theatrical event and the most significant variances occur within the communicative frame. The aesthetic experience

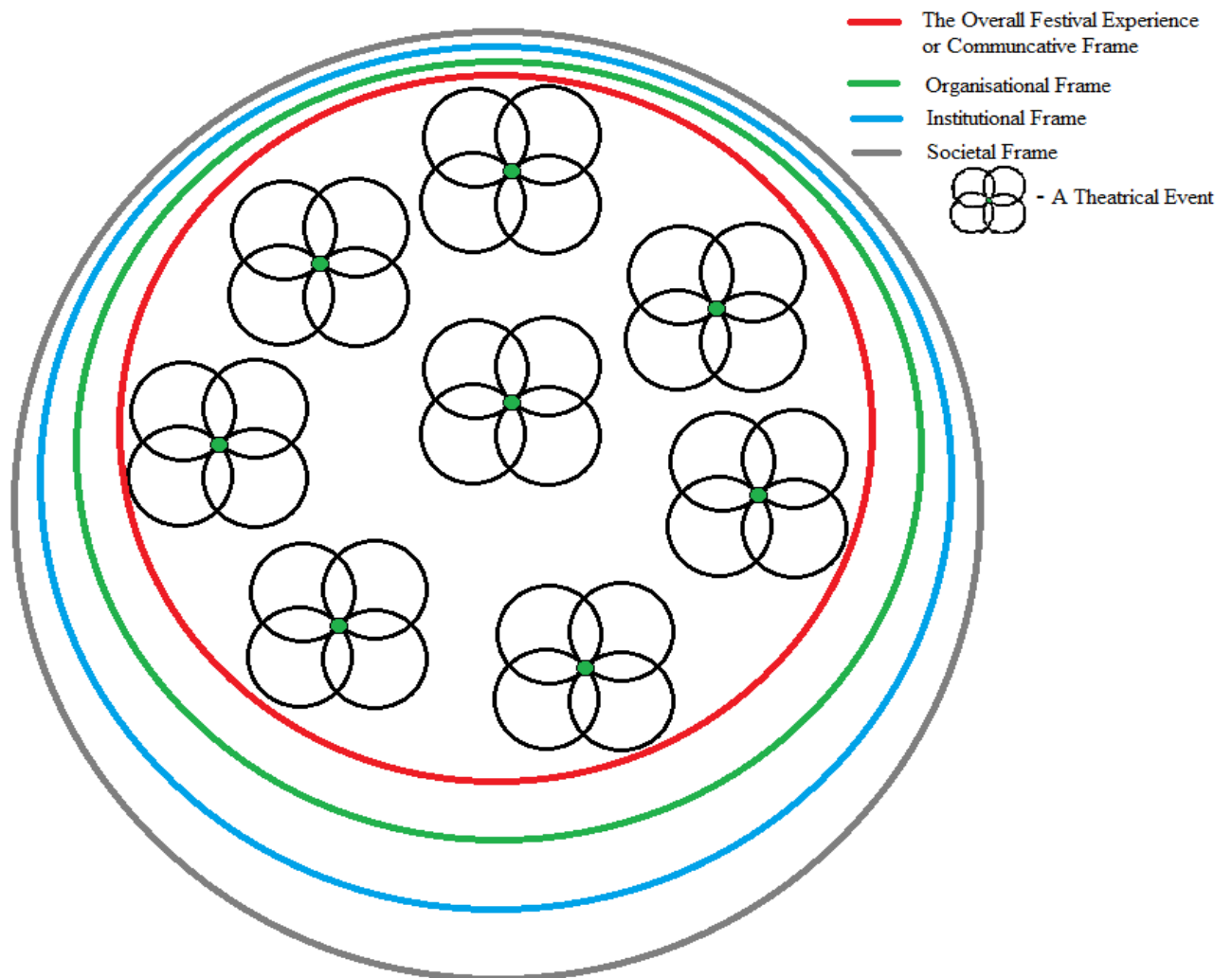
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<sup>13</sup> The Stage X festival no longer exists in the festival form discussed in this study, but the organisation and other structures that produced the festival are still in operation. The organisation that produced the Stage X festival still produces a children’s festival named OUT OF THE BOX and utilise the same processes and structures as they did to produce the Stage X festival. The manner in which this organisation operated to produce the Stage X festival is very applicable to this study and is why the Stage X festival is investigated.

that audience members have during production and reception, is more intricate during a festival; the target audience will inevitably determine the festival's construct and the theatrical communication taking place (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 8). Related to the communicative core is the significance of the space in which the festival occurs.

Seeing as

theatre is a spatial art, there are a number of dimensions to this spatiality, including the performance location, particular spatial characteristics of that location, the relationship between the actor space and the audience space, and the use of space by the actors (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 101 – 102).



**Figure 3.1: A Schema for Festivalisation Processes and Experiences**

The festival thus is a unique phenomenon because of the distinctive elements of space, production of meaning and duration of a festival that occur on several levels within the communicative frame (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 101). In the festival production phase organisers, practitioners and other possible stakeholders need to carefully consider the aspects mentioned above, as well as the choices they make in relation to these issues, for their actions will greatly influence the characteristics of a festival and its quality and success.

Before returning to the multiple communicative processes taking place during a festival, and in order to accurately investigate the processes taking place within the communicative frame (which directly affects the festival), this paper first needs to establish what indirect structures and elements are at play.

### **3.3. FRAMING THE DIMENSIONS OF A FESTIVAL'S COMPOSITION WITHIN ITS SOCIETAL CONTEXT**

#### **3.3.1. Cultural Context**

The cultural context of the festival plainly explains the societal frame. It relates to the socio-political setting of festivals and is also concerned with the significant role that economics play in cultural events (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 20). The critical impact that politics and related ideologies, as well as public subsidies and private sponsorships, can have on festivals, is of great importance to this study and to all events (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 20). There are several parties involved that are major players in the South African TYP industry: “the reputation of board members, the political aims of dominant parties, and the engagement of the media” are a few important examples for the success of a healthy cultural sector (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 20). The latter is of particular interest to this study, as the “media play a potent role in most policy-making and constitute a major source for the study of cultural context”; engagement of the media is another feature lacking in development of youth theatre in South Africa (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21). It is this societal sphere that,

according to Van Maanen, exerts considerable influence on all the other structures and processes of a festival, impacting on the perception systems of both organisers and spectators.

The festival will almost always have an impact, hopefully a “positive influence on the city [or town] where it takes place”, and can also be studied to reveal “the short-term effect such as higher turnouts for the tourist industry as well as long-term effects for the reputation and self-esteem of the city [or town]” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21). Yet if one considers researching the cultural context of a city or town that hosts a festival, there are various aspects to be assessed:

Power structures – on formal, informal and real levels – have to be analysed, including arts councils, lobby groups, potential and actual sponsors, etc. At least official policy documents need to be secured (...) [as well as] informal deliberations that precede formal decisions [into which it] might be difficult to gain insight (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21).

Another aspect that needs to be considered, is the demographics of the area where the various “class, ethnic, religious and gender structures have to be taken into account to give a fair picture of the cultural context” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21). This becomes important to a practitioner wanting to create a festival, for the “participants of a festival recognise each other as participants and develop a group identity or group feeling” and through their interaction “enhance the experience of the event” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 20). This notion is clearly evident during the EDERED Association’s European Children’s Theatre Encounters, on which I will elaborate. This event is more process-orientated than product-orientated and intertwines “two youth theatre models: ... [a] community and theatre/arts model” (Aaltonen 2006: 239). “The aim of the [European Drama] Encounters is to provide intercultural exchange and communication through diverse forms of theatre and drama” (Aaltonen 2006: 22). Aaltonen’s research in *Intercultural Bridges in Teenager’s Theatrical Events* (2006) makes it clear that when young people participate in these workshop groups to create a theatrical performance, the notions of identity and community are thoroughly explored

and exemplified. By respecting and recycling the young participants' cultural-aesthetic forms of expression, the experience is undoubtedly enhanced. This hybrid form of theatrical practice – combining community arts and major arts festival practices – is explored in detail in Chapter 4, as it seems to yield incredible results amongst young people who participate in such practices. First-hand experience of a group of young people creating a group identity and learning from one another was gained during a workshop performance I created with a group of young people at a Stellenbosch high school in 2013.

Considering Van Maanen's perspective of the festival, it is evident that this third circle of context (societal frame in figure 3.1), or outer frame as Bennett calls it, impacts on all the other processes of the other frameworks, as it shapes the inner frame according to the changes that occur within the broader society. Van Maanen divides the groups in the societal frame into two: the first being "the social, educational, aesthetic and media worlds"; and the second relating to "the world of law and the political, economic and technological worlds" (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 273). The former group includes spectators and organisers alike, as they are directly involved in theatrical events and festivals, and condition the "themes, forms and cultural behaviour" (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 273). The perception systems of these two indispensable parties are heavily influenced by their cultural context. The latter group concerns the characteristics of the cultural context that impact on the institutional and organisational systems of a theatrical event or festival (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 273).

The dominant impact of this group affects many areas of the festival and can "influence or support current tendencies; the direction of this support, in turn, depends on the dominance within [this group] itself" (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 273). This group's impact affects crucial elements of the festival, such as the economic and technological elements, but the most significant impact is on the theatre industry itself. This group can influence the "working conditions of artists, accessibility to performances, the relationship between the market and the government in the production and distribution of theatre, and, on a higher level, the position of theatre in society" (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 273). It therefore is a vital role-player in creating a

successful festival, as the support and dedication of the role-players within this frame can either make or break the festival experience. The festival experience is predominantly generated by the processes of the institutional and organisational systems of this frame.

### **3.3.2. Contextual Theatricality**

Contextual theatricality of the theatrical event relates to all the structures and processes of theatrical production, apart from the actual performance on stage, and designates the environment in which the event occurs (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21). This environment consists of the various “aesthetic conventions, the division of genres, the locations, the organisational traditions, equity rights” *et cetera*. “In addition, the conventions, expectations, habits and economy of the potential audiences also belong to the sphere of contextual theatricality” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21).

It is the norm of some festivals to utilise “a narrower selection of genres or types of theatre” than that of a theatre’s general repertory; the idea is to show “productions which are thought to be exceptional or which have been commissioned especially for the occasion” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 21). These specially commissioned works are especially prominent within festivals for young people in other countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom, where the boundaries of theatrical conventions are constantly pushed to keep up with the ever-changing nature of youth culture. The idea of a festival is not only positive for spectators, but for all theatre practitioners, for when they come in contact with the works of their peers, they are faced with challenges that would inspire, renew and expand their own work (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 22). This can only lead to more innovative work being created in the future, which, in turn, means that the arts are constantly being cultivated and developed.

Van Maanen’s theory elaborated this dimension of a festival and developed a triangular model of the theatre system. The production-distribution-consumption triangle is found to be at the core of the institutional frame, with most of the other influencing parties surrounding it (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 267). Van Maanen identifies three aspects to describe the relationship of this dynamic system. First, there is the institutional

system consisting of “a coherent set of elements” that are connected to one another by the relations between them (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 267). Secondly, the institutional system has relations with other systems, such as the cultural context, and “for this reason and by [its] internal dynamics [has] the capacity to change” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 267). Thirdly, there is the institutional frame that is determined by its borders and involves the components that belong to it. Evidently when the institutional and/or organisational frame maintains the relation between its components more powerfully in its own system than its relation to components outside of the system (such as those found in the societal frame), “new subsystems and aspect systems” in the institutional and organisational frames can be defined within societal systems (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 267). This implies that the whole system can be redefined and that, I believe, can be achieved with the proper execution of a youth arts festival. Thus, if the relation within and between the theatrical organisation is stronger than the relations of other social, political, educational or cultural systems, these latter systems can be influenced and changed. Essentially the fields of production, reception and distribution are the three main elements of the theatre system’s institutional context. A discussion of these fields will follow, as they are highly applicable to the organisation and production of a festival.

The *production system* of a festival relates to “the co-operation (and non-co-operation) of the people involved” in the creation of a festival. This implies the “types of companies, producing collectives and individual theatre artists” involved, as well as the relations between them, i.e. the way these individuals and organisations meet, “what their mutual responsibility and contractual connection is, and especially how the production process itself is organised” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 269).

The *system of distribution* deals with the structures and processes that make festivals available for people to participate in them. The three main methods utilised in this system, are programming, marketing and hosting, productions, and spectators” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 270). This discloses the permanent relationship that is required between the systems of production and reception (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 270). It is also an essential element of the playing culture of a festival, as it

represents the (real and intangible) space in which organisers and spectators meet – emphasising the festival organisers’ responsibility for the spectators’ festival experience.

The *consumption system* is a responsibility of organisers and practitioners that is planned and executed very well in most countries (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 270). One of the most prominent forms of theatre consumption is “theatre education, which means the development of possible audiences with tastes and knowledge (cultural capital) to experience a mental profit of theatre visits” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 272). In relation to youth festivals, it seems that a more trustworthy and elaborate form of communication is necessary to ensure that the young participants are able to experience meaningful encounters at a festival. The organisers of the Stage X festival in Australia undertook and involved its young target audience in a rigorous consultation process that positioned the participants as both consumers and produces. It is this unique positioning that has major implications for the playing culture sphere of the festival which will be discussed later.

A special field of interest within the circles of theatre practitioners and their peers internationally are the potential improvements that can be made to arts festivals and their production (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 22). The organisers of any festival, and especially that of youth festivals, have a keen interest “to know how the new media can be made use of, not only as tools for administration as is the case today, but also as an ingredient in artistic process[es]” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al 2007: 21). For instance, the use of social media platforms and new media technology, such as mobile phone apps, could enable organisers to be more frequently in touch with youth audiences about the development of a new performance or festival. This could also enable young people to gain a sense of ownership over the event or festival as their input influences the final production of the event or festival. The use of new media (the social media platform in particular) has also become an effective way of receiving feedback from participants about their experiences of an event; I, for one, was part of an initiative utilised by the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees<sup>14</sup> (KKNK) that used Facebook as a means of receiving

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<sup>14</sup> Little Karoo National Arts Festival



feedback from students about their experience of specific productions and the festival in general (to be elaborated on in Chapter 5). This gives organisers the opportunity to receive immediate feedback of participants' experience of the festival and allows for a quicker response time. The influence and impact of new media and technology is undeniable and is an integral part of young people's lives, it is thus inevitable that it will be integrated into theatrical performances. Sauter notes that

[p]erformance as an art form, including all available technical and visual effects, seems to have become a dominating element in festivals, but only a broad, international survey can point out probable future directions (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 22).

Globally, this is an interesting development, especially in relation to young people and the manner in which they use new media. New media, an integral part of the modern young person's life and strongly related to youth popular culture, should without a doubt be incorporated into the arts practices. The influences that new media and technology can have on the production, distribution and consumption elements of a festival are numerous. As Sauter states above only a broad survey would be able to reveal the possible directions – some of these possibilities might be: a more integrated process of production and a wider field of distribution and consumption.

After examining international festivals, I argue that, hopefully, the same successful results can be yielded locally when international trends and practices are put into practice. The reasoning behind my argument is based on the idea that popular culture amongst young people, some local influences and nuances taken into consideration, is globally very similar. One can only hope that, through the same approach as that of other international festivals, young South Africans might find a festival worth attending for the arts, and not only for the social aspect which seems to be the case in many situations.

## **The Experience of the Dimensions of a Festival's Composition within its Societal Context**

### **3.3.3. Playing Culture**

As previously noted, the notion of playing culture puts “the theatrical event in opposition to written culture” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 18). The idea of playing culture is that of “a mode of expression through which society communicates its value system” and thus “relates the theatrical event to a range of activities” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 19). It is within this frame that the physical aspects of an encounter between the performer and spectator of a theatrical event – or a ‘flower’ event of a festival (referred to in figure 3.1) – are organised; specifically relating to the aspects of place and time within which the particular encounter or ‘flower’ event takes place and how organisers have applied these aspects to create a meaningful experience for the participants (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 244). It should be noted that it is within this context that the event handles real time and space, as well as the place of meeting. Furthermore, to use Van Maanen’s terminology, this frame “activates specific perception schemes” in participants, and influences and shapes the communicative frame (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 244). This frame can only function through recognising that the perception systems of participants are present and active, as their interpretation and involvement in the communicative frame is the reason why production of meaning takes place during an encounter (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 244). Ultimately the festival participants are the people who ascribe meaning to the overall festival experience and determine whether it was successful.

Sauter states that the theatrical event is a non-literary art form, that it “corresponds closely with film and other moving images, visual arts, dance, music, etc.”, and that it also is a cultural performance (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 19). He furthermore adds that “playing culture contains typically strong physical elements” and has to be taught and transported through traditional means of intergenerational teachings (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 19). During a festival the playing culture receives more attention

than usual in that the playing is directly focused upon throughout the concentration of activities. The degree of this concentration depends strongly on the ‘density’ of a festival, i.e. the location, duration and frequency of festival events (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 19). This reveals why I so strongly advocate the proper execution of a youth festival by TYP practitioners in South Africa, so that we do not lose out on the wonderful cultural practice of theatrical activities that are made possible by such an event.

In relation to the concept of a ‘flow’ experience, developed by Michael Csikszentmihaly, which describes a high degree of concentration, it is at first “an assumption that the density of the festival carries significance for the spectators’ experience as a heightened state of participation and feelings of ‘communitas’” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 20). This is a point which will be discussed later, but for now the fact remains that the location, duration and frequency of events are part of the playing culture of a festival and should be aptly organised so as to create a heightened feeling of *communitas* amongst participants. A festival, for instance, needs to completely take over and change the environment in which it takes place. This is clearly seen at music festivals in South Africa, such as Rocking the Daisies, RAMfest, OppiKoppi and Up the Creek. These festivals are mostly held on farms on the outskirts of cities or towns. The *scène* of the festival, as well the décor and setup of multiple stages, transforms the environment to create something new and unfamiliar to the participant, which, in turn, generates a sense of *communitas*. Furthermore, the multiple stages are in rather close proximity to one another, and to food stalls, bars and toilet facilities. The condensed environment reduces the walking distance of participants and creates more accessible and user-friendly conditions. The duration of these music festivals varies; they usually take place over weekends when larger participation can be ensured, as many participants are working youths or students.

### **3.3.4. Theatrical Playing**

The sphere of theatrical playing encapsulates the here-and-now experience, the space in which the performer and spectator mutually meet, and necessitates the synchronised presence of both parties (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 22). This encounter is a

communicative interaction that transpires on various levels (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). During this encounter the performer exhibits his personality, displays his artistic skills and creates a “symbolic figure” which reaches “the spectator through levels of sensory, artistic and symbolic communication” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). Van Maanen describes this dimension as the *communicative frame*. It is at the core of theatrical communication, for it is “actually constructed within the event” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243). This frame is where and when the perception systems of all participants (organisers, performers, spectators, etc.) are shared (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243).

The reason for defining a shared field of perception is twofold. Firstly, because the participant’s perception systems perform their own function within this frame but also within all the other frames or dimensions directly or indirectly functioning within the festival (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243). The second reason is that the independent presence and activity of spectators’ perception systems will become intelligible when it is understood that perception systems operate within the communicative – and organisational – frame of an event, but they have been formed by and can exist outside the event’s frames (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243).

The nature of the communication is significantly determined by the relationship between the perception systems of both spectators and performers/organisers. Even if the perception systems are similar or different it inevitably “condition[s] the theatrical communication” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243). Ultimately, the communicative frame is what shapes the theatrical experience and, unlike the other frames, “does not have a real contextual character ... but shapes itself during the event on a basis of the relation between both perception systems, and is influenced by frames around it” (Van Maanen in Cremona et al. 2004: 243-244).

In order to expand this notion of the theatrical event to the level of an entire festival, one has to consider several factors. As previously stated, a festival can “create an atmosphere of playing culture, which invites and stimulates the visitor to look for theatrical experiences outside the conventional venues” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). As

is the case with any theatrical event, there are “special areas for post-performance meetings” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). This also applies to festivals, and these areas “open up spaces for encounters between performers and spectators, but also for informal meetings between artists and other members of the public” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). This can be seen in the public and open-access areas of a festival, such as in and around food and drink stalls. An essential element of participating in festivals as a leisure activity, is the possibility to socialise with friends – a fundamental necessity for young people. These social activities can also help create a sense of *communitas* during a festival.

Giving the festival a thematic focus could further contribute to creating a feeling of unison amongst participants and the festival activities. This should enable participants to deal more easily with the emotional and intellectual challenges a festival brings to the table. Finally, the most significant feature of the theatrical playing sphere is to allow participants to feel detached from everyday living, to transport them into a liminal space where they can have meaningful experiences, leaving them with wanting more (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23).

### **3.4. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A FESTIVAL**

The three characteristics that have “particular impact on the notion of festival and festivalising”, are *power*, *people* and *community*, even though “elements such as length, time, price and advertising certainly come to feature in any analysis of a festival event” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 5). These three characteristics are discussed below.

The factor of *power* concerns various aspects of the festivalisation process, the most prominent feature being the “relationship between the type of playing culture [which] contributes to the creation of the event and the cultural context in which it is inserted” and experienced (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6). This, in turn, gives the festival (as public event) the characteristics which the participants perceive and identify with (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6). As pointed out by Schoenmakers, the festival is

seen as a “meta-event”, for one of the “main processes [of] festivalising is to provide quantity, as well as diversity, even within the same performance genre” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6). The festival consists of numerous single events joined by various factors; the most prominent being the name and/or theme of the festival (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6). These two factors, theme and the polysystemic nature, are seminal role-players in the artistic shaping of a festival – especially that of theme. They are termed the “festival labels” and declare the festivals objectives and identity (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6).

These labels are particularly relevant to the context of the ‘theatrical playing’, as they not only play an important role in the creation or selection of the performances themselves, but also in the type of encounter between artist and spectator, as well as the type of spectator who will be attracted to the festival (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6).

The Stage X festival held in Australia is an excellent example of how these two elements were meticulously put together in order to ensure that the young people fully grasp what they were in for when they attended the festival. The organisers of the Stage X festival were able to constantly re-evaluate the needs and desires of their young target market through the employment of a consultation process (Seffrin 2006). The festival and its theme were adapted to the constantly changing phenomenon of youth culture (Seffrin 2006). The polysystemic nature of a festival allows festival organisers to broaden the range of performances hosted at the festival.

One of the other labels attached to the idea of a festival, is the programme. It is the programme that conveys the essence of the festival to the public (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 6 – 7). Through the programme the participants can engage with the organisers’ intentions, which play a significant role in promoting the festival and its aims and objectives. It is important to know that the

organisers’ intentions can vary widely from purely commercial to more social perspective, such as that of allowing a community to reflect on its identity, to

attain recognition, or even to juxtapose itself to the prevailing culture in order to strengthen or confront it (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 7).

This is a very important aspect in festivals aimed at the youth, for the intentions and motivation of the organisers can have a significant and decisive impact and influence on the audiences' perception and process of identification within the festival structure. The audiences and their needs are a very important factor in the creation of a festival.

The process of festivalising is not only “heavily determined by its dimensions (national regional or local)” or the type of productions on offer, but also by the “type of audience(s) [or *people*] it sets out to attract” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 8).

The space(s) in which the festival is to take place become(s) a very important factor in attracting a target audience. The visible aspects of the festival are particularly important to a youthful audience bombarded daily with cultural images. For them there will be big difference from attending an event in a formal theatre in the city which

pre-determines a very different kind of celebration to one that is held in the sprawling grounds covering a specially designated area that is transformed or even made alive for the space of the festival (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 8).

This is noticeable at music festivals in South Africa, where a wider range of spectators are attracted to a festival ground outside the confines of a town or city than that to a gig held in an enclosed city or town environment. My research and personal experience revealed that a much larger number of participants attend music festivals than they do gigs in towns or cities. This is attributed to the large open space of the event and, of course, the wider variety of music available at festivals. The way in which festivals noticeably transform the environment in which they take place, is also more appealing, as it creates a novel experience – an experience different from that they are used to in the enclosed space of a pub or club. The multi-space festivals held on open grounds, “engender a whole range of activities, besides the actual performances themselves, [as

well as] areas for meeting, discussion and relaxation” – essential components of a festival culture (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 8).

The festival organisers’ “choices in determining the space and organisation of the event are essential components in the programming and general appeal of the festival” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 9). This becomes an extremely important aspect to festivals that target specific audiences, especially when “the aim of the festival is not simply to show, but to involve the persons attending in the creative process itself” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 9), such as the OUT OF THE BOX festival in Australia which directly involves the target audience in the creative processes and aims to empower the young participants by directly involving them in production processes of the festival. Other festivals, such as the local KKNK which creates spaces for young people to be creatively involved in the festival through workshops offered by professional practitioners, as well as specially commissioned productions involving and aimed at young people. These two qualities of festivalising, as well as others, “determine, but are also determined by, the type of spectator who attends the specific type of festival” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 10).

This brings us to the last factor of *community* up for discussion next. The first factor to consider, is the sense of community created within the structures of festival. There are certain festivals that are only organised for “an elite few whose very presence at the festival confirms their status in the eyes of their co-elite members”. This is known as a hierarchical type of festival and does “not envisage any participatory processes in the performances themselves” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 10). The processes of these festivals differ from those events “that aim to create a theatrical event where not only certain sectors, but the whole community [participate] in the festival”, and where participants can “identify themselves as a single homogeneous group”, thus being “transformed into a temporary ‘communitas’” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 10 - 11). The aforementioned type of event is what I am aiming for in this study where “discussions and workshops (...) can provide an added dimension to the recognition of the spectator’s status”, as revealed by Sauter (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 10). It is this type of collective creation of a festival that



goes far beyond purely commercial aims, and often seeks out to ‘eventify’ salient aspects of the life of a particular society, or to celebrate the culture, beliefs or value system which distinguish it from other societies (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 11).

I believe this notion to be an appropriate approach for creating a festival aimed at young people. The process of identification with *communitas* is “brought on by various factors, such as the participants’ origin, which provide a common cultural idiom” (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 11). Another possible factor that can contribute to the identification process, is a shared common interest amongst participants at a festival. This is not always the case with major arts festivals which attract a miscellany of audience members and practitioners (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 11). By taking both of these basic concepts into account, it becomes evident that South African practitioners organising a festival aimed at young people need to take certain socio-economic, geo-political and cultural elements into consideration; this will help ensure the sustainability and success of a festival, as well as the continuous participation of the public.

The entire South African youth cannot be considered a homogeneous group, yet one can focus on specific elements that stand out amongst youth popular culture to provide practitioners with the insight of what structures and elements will they need to create an event that will appeal to the target market. This was what the organisers of the Stage X festival achieved through utilising a consultation process. It will only be through trial and error that practitioners will be able to discover exactly which processes and structures work for young people in their area, but thorough research and consultation with the target audience could reduce the risk of complete failure. Although the polysystemic nature of the festival event makes it rather difficult to “penetrate all the processes at play within the event itself”, in practice it can still be approached on a theoretical level to investigate, discover and examine what processes and structures are currently in place within a South African context, and which can be utilised and developed for specifically a TYP event (Cremona in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 13).

Other factors that contribute to the character of a festival and impact on the four frames of Sauter's model, are concepts such as the *values* of participants, and the *identities* they possess and bring to the table in the festival environment. Another final, element that significantly impacts on the creation and execution of a festival, is the festival's *history*. These elements will be discussed shortly.

The concept of *values* "characterises the four elements [of Sauter] as they move from one point to another". This factor is utilised by practitioners and possible stakeholders as a means to strategically influence the "cultural effects" of an event (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). It is in the hands of the organisers of such a festival "to produce performances with aesthetic, moral, educational and other values"; this is an aspect utilised by many, if not all, festivals to create a certain identity (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23). Audiences participating in the playing culture of a festival lend status to the theatre or event they visit; and this can become a powerful argument for politicians or sponsoring organisations to continue their support for the festival in question and, in the best of cases, for cultural purposes in general (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 23 – 24).

*Identity* is utilised to "underline such factors as class and age, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality" (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). The identities of participants can "change the whole picture of a festival event", for the "conditions [of] establishing theatrical events for children, [or other peer groups] are significantly different from those of a regular urban theatre or commercial stage" (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). This becomes extremely significant in relation to creating events for specific target audiences, as the youths' cultural references will differ from other groups, such as immigrants or unemployed or gay communities (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). The identities of the target audience "always need to be taken into consideration, be it mainstream or subcultures", as the "identities affect not only one or two elements of the model, but can completely change the overall pattern of the theatrical event [or festival]" (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). The notion of *identity* becomes rather problematic when working with an extremely heterogeneous group such as teenagers, yet

the polysystemic nature of a festival may create space for most of the social and cultural needs of its young participants.

The final concept of *history* relates to the extent the historical circumstances of a theatrical- or festival event “change the here-and-now experience, and can be investigated and analysed” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). For the reputation of a festival and the shared experience that participants have considerably influences the experience that any participant will have at a festival. This is a worrying idea, for as yet there is not a successfully sustained festival for young people in South Africa. The international examples that will be used, will, however, largely contribute to exploring the various possibilities available to TYP practitioners in South Africa to build a possible model. A positive aspect, in my eyes, in relation to young people’s constant access to new media, is how the advent and the use of electronic media are affecting the concept of playing culture (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). The utilisation of new media could greatly contribute to the historical aspect and reputation of a festival aimed at teenagers. As to date this has not yet had a big impact on the structures of theatre organisation, probably because the “position of theatre as an influential contributor to public opinion has most likely weakened” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24). It remains clear, though, that “[t]he historical aspects are a necessary complement to all the elements of the theatrical event model”, thus by creating a high-quality experience and building a good reputation could greatly contribute to the sustainability of a festival (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 24).

Considering the major festivals in South Africa, such as the KKNK, the history and the historical impact of a festival changes as the focus of the festival changes. This appears to occur when a new artistic director or festival director is appointed, bringing a new perspective to that which the festival should focus on. The traditions, practices and trends of a festival is thus related to changes within the organisational and institutional frames and the way in which they affect the playing culture and theatrical playing dimensions and vice versa. Ultimately, one festival experience will never be the same as the next due to changes occurring within the various levels of festivalisation that impact and shape the history of a festival.

### 3.5. BASIC ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

Before moving on to the next chapter, there are a few characteristics of the recipients of theatrical events that should be discussed, as well as differences in processing information and the consequences thereof. Henri Schoenmakers applies and extends the concepts of Erving Goffman of “theatre-goers, spectators [or] participants” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29). Goffman differentiates between two types of recipients at a festival, the *theatre-goer* and the *onlooker* (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29).

The recipient as *theatre-goer* is one participating at the reality level of the theatrical event, the one buying real tickets with real money, drinking real coffee... at interval, and the one who is irritated when a fellow-spectator [eats] his or her candy too loudly. The *onlooker* is the one participating in the fictional world and accepting [the fact that] the character portrayed on stage is not a flesh-and-blood human being (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29).

Thus the recipient as onlooker is closely related to the concept of ‘spectator’, which is a general term assigned to participants who actively participate in theatrical communication. (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29) As such

the spectator deals not only with the fictional world, but also with the way the theatre makers use theatrical means to evoke this fictional world. Besides the concept *theatre-goer* (sic) we also introduce the more general term *cultural participant* (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29).

According to this, the “cultural participant” can take on the role of *theatre-goer* [as s/he] enters the theatre.

As one extends these concepts to the festival framework, the term *festival participant* is used to specifically designate the function related to a *cultural participant* (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 29 – 30). This distinction of functions enables

researchers to explain the differences between participating recipients of a theatrical event within and outside a festival framework (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 30).

The *festival participant*, who is *theatergoer* and *spectator* as well, is not only able to judge the performance as a piece of art made by the theatre makers, but he is able to judge the performance as an act of selection and programming of the festival organisers (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 30).

Thus the distinction in the theory enables researchers to differentiate between a single performative event and a performance within a festival. The *festival participant* concept enables researchers to distinguish the “different cognitive and emotional ways of information processing” of a theatregoer attending a theatrical event outside the festival and a participant experiencing a performance during a festival (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 30).

The last concepts that need to be discussed, are two variables that are of great importance to investigate, analyse and interpret the differences of “information processing as well as its consequences” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 30). These are the “principle of foregrounding and a difference between types of festivals” that will be discussed under the next heading (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 30).

The context or principle of foregrounding is an aspect of a festival that was briefly discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The principle of foregrounding is the feature that draws particular awareness to festivals – the element that distinguishes festivals “from other, more regular activities, which are considered to be ‘normal’...[within the circles of] public communication” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31). The concept is a characteristic of a festival as it is foregrounded<sup>15</sup> against a background of other events not considered to be festivals (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 30). It is assumed that this has certain effects on the “perception, interpretation and experience” of a “festival participant or a theatregoer ... of a single theatrical event

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<sup>15</sup> Here the term foregrounding is used in a very general sense and not merely a technical sense as used in formalist theory where it can indicate an emphasis on the artefact level of communicative signs – see Van Peer 1980 and 1986 (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31).

within the festival structure”, but depends on how much a recipient is aware of the foregrounding principle (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31). Schoenmakers summarises this as follows:

A recipient that is less aware undergoes more dominant *theatergoer [sic]* and *spectator* functions. Whereas a recipient that is more aware, the *festival participant* becomes more dominant and the more this function will influence the interpretation, emotion and evaluation of the experience of the spectator (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31).

A participant who is well-acquainted with a festival construct, will perceive a festival with more competence than a person with less knowledge of theatre and performance. Due to the fact that I am more aware of the processes and structures that create my festival experience, I will, arguably, enter into a flow experience and *communitas* with more ease. Thus the festival experience will be different for me. As I can ascribe a different kind of meaning and, perhaps, a deeper meaning on a personal level than a person who is just attending the festival to see a few shows and socialise with friends, I am aware of the fact that I am part of an eventification process.

The final aspect of this differentiating concept to be discussed, is the idea of festivals as “meta-festivals” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31). This is relates to the

intended participants of a festival, [for] it makes sense to distinguish between the festivals organised for the same kind of people, who would be the spectators targeted for the individual theatrical events, and another type of festival organised for a group of participants other than the ‘natural spectators’ of such individual events (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31).

Schoenmakers proposes to label this latter type of festival a *meta-festival*, because the intention of organisers “is to exchange information and experiences between the theatre makers of the groups participating in the festival” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 31). These festivals enable “a discourse between experts *about* the theatrical works of art”; participants therefore “look differently at the theatrical activities than the natural

audience would do in the ‘natural’ setting of the original culture” (Schoenmakers in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 32). The Swedish Theatre Biennale festival, for instance, under leadership of the Swedish Theatre Union, “unites theatres, theatre and dance groups, artists, technicians and educational institutions” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 203). The festival aims to promote issues surrounding “cultural politics and economic problems, taxes and sponsorship, [and] the training of professionals ... [and] works for the public visibility of the performing arts” (Sauter in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 202 – 203). The festival is predominantly aimed at theatre practitioners and enables communication between the various participants from all over the world. What this brings to light, is the ability of organisers to establish specific frameworks for specific audiences, becoming very appropriate when festival events aimed at a (marginalised) youth culture are developed and produced.

### **3.6. IMPLEMENTING THE DEVISED MODEL**

This chapter has duly developed a devised model that consists of the various methodologies developed by the IFTR group and other scholars (Bennett). Through using the devised model of this chapter, this study is able to thoroughly scrutinise the various elements of the different festivals and events under investigation. It was stated that the experience of different festivals cannot easily be compared, but the structures creating this experience, are very similar. Every festival is made up of the cultural context, contextual theatricality, playing culture and theatrical playing dimensions discussed above; and these elements are indeed comparable.

From the above amalgamation of methodologies it is clear that numerous organisations and procedures are involved in producing a festival. The degree in which the various structures are involved in producing a festival, as well as the influence they exert, varies. The different structures and processes of the festival overlap and influence one another in numerous areas and can make it rather challenging to examine and eloquently describe the diverse activities taking place. The integration of the various theories into a devised model facilitates a more thorough and systematic investigation into the numerous

structures and processes involved in planning, producing and experiencing a festival. The devised model allows this study to examine designated areas that create the dynamic nature of a festival. The various methodologies also highlight the ideal nature of the various frames or dimensions in order to create and sustain a festival.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this study examine the international and local trends and practices of festivals for young people. Using the devised model to examine different festivals, this study will be able to highlight the shortcomings and necessary areas of development within the South African TYP industry. In turn, this will enable this study to generate a model that can be put into practice to produce a festival for young people in South Africa.

### **3.7. CONCLUSION**

Modern festivals have to function and survive in an ever-changing socio-political environment and have gained prominent presence within global societies as a means of cultural expression. Looking into the history of festivalisation, it is evident that this theatrical form can “act as propaganda and ... reinforce the value systems” the organising body wants to establish or reconfirm (Seffrin 2006: 15). Primarily, governments and arts councils utilise the form as a valuable device to enhance cultural tourism and to add to the prestige of a city, town or region’s image (Seffrin 2006: 6).

Furthermore, even though media and governments show a growing interest in festivals, the academic research about the modern festival form remains insufficient, especially the significant role it plays in cultural evolution and I hope this paper can contribute to the importance of cultural practices (Seffrin 2006: 6). This relates to the notion of power discussed in this chapter and significantly reveals the symbiotic relationship between the various festival frames or dimensions. If there is an imbalance in one of the dimensions, say for instance the government’s perceives TYP as solely an educational tool or an autocratic programme is put together by organisers, the other dimensions need to adapt to the power exerted by the other dimension. The argument should make people in power who are involved in organising festivals aware of the fact that that their decisions cause a



ripple effect on the other dimensions. Evidently the concepts of power, people and community run through all the dimensions, and the manner these notions manifest in each dimension impacts on all the other processes and structures of a festival and its experience. Considering the position that young people, especially teenagers, are given by society as viable cultural contributors it is, in my opinion, the duty of practitioners to give them a voice and credibility.

A noteworthy paradigm shift has occurred in the way society views the concepts of culture and creativity. Previously culture and creativity were “understood as ‘soft’ notions of aesthetics, pertaining only to the arts”, but have at present progressively been integrated into mainstream of economic activities (Seffrin 2006: 24). The predicament for this study remains “that there is a significant gap in the research regarding the role of festivals within this paradigm shift regarding cultural consumption and production” (Seffrin 2006: 24). The manner conventional arts such as theatre, music, dance and fine arts feed into the wider cultural infrastructure, provides it with a valuable and contributable function in this new environment. These forms and their “cultural circuits can be extremely catalytic for local creativity and innovation in both cultural production and consumption” (O’Connor in Hartley and Haseman, 2000: 28-29). A festival, particularly the boutique festival model which positions its audience as both producer and consumer of the festival experience, is in an effective position to coalesce the modern perception of production and consumption (Seffrin 2006: 27).

The relationship festival organisers build with their target audience is a vital element in the festivalising process, and healthy communication ensures the success and sustainability of a festival. It is through suitable channels of communication between all the people involved in creating a festival experience that a prestigious playing culture which confirms the values and sense of community amongst participants, can be formed. Creating a temporary *communitas* is the responsibility of organisers who must produce a programme that enables participants to share and experience their shared interests. The time participants spend together within the liminal space of a festival, could allow them to (re)confirm and or (re)shape their values and identities if they choose to. This task has

become rather nebulous in modern society, as values and identities have become much more variable.

In relation to its predecessors the position, function and complications of the modern festival have clearly become more obscured. In the past people attended and participated in festivals mostly because of “personal, religious or other affiliations or by decree of some authority”, but at present the concepts of attendance and participation are matters greatly disputed and speculated by theoreticians and practitioners (Seffrin 2006: 17). The heterogeneous nature of festival participants is what contributes greatly to this uncertainty; festival participants’ desire for theatres “intellectual, artistic or emotional satisfaction..., is no longer adequate” (Van Geijn & Van Veen 2002: 11). Clearly the contemporary festival cannot solely be an artistic event – it has to be a social experience as well, because “[p]eople want to meet, communicate and experience something special together” (Van Geijn & Van Veen 2002: 11). The current trends in festival organisation enable practitioners to produce events to showcase paramount performances and practices, or to (re)confirm a feeling of community, or a blend of both these features (Seffrin 2006: 15). This study explores these notions in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FESTIVALS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – International Trends and Practices**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

All over the world the creation of TYP presents itself in a variety of forms and caters for differing age groups; from infants (3 – 6 years) and children (7 – 12 years) to teenagers and young adults (13 – 26 years). Practitioners utilise numerous styles and different ideologies which in order to produce and execute TYP for these various demographics. It is clear that this study seeks to examine a specific phenomenon – a youth festival for teenagers and young adults. The festival as an event also presents itself in a variety of forms; yet the question that needs to be asked is: Which of these forms is most suitable for young people? I have come across many forms that have been employed to create a festival for young people or at least provide a platform for TYP within the festival's structure. In the end three forms stood out: the major arts festival; the community arts festival and, finally, the boutique arts festival. The latter mostly applies to this study.

The study looks into festivals hosted in countries that have well-functioning and sustainable TYP industries. By comparing these to the current state of TYP practices in South Africa the research can thoroughly evaluate the state of local affairs. The concepts of the devised model in the previous chapter are applied to actual festivals to gain a clearer comprehension of the festival as theatrical event. The devised model allows this study to investigate the characteristics of the key elements on which the TYP industry in these countries are built. The example festivals that follow will enable this study to discern which processes and structures are needed and most appropriate for creating a festival aimed at young people – a festival which they will willingly and lovingly help create and consume.

This chapter also draws on a SWOT analysis of the various factors required to be in place in order to create a successful, meaningful and sustainable festival for young people. The

features of this type of festival event provide its participants with moments of significance or peak-experiences while they are attending and participating in the festival activities. Although these experiences differ from individual to individual, the structure for creating such experiences is highly comparable between events. A devised model, consisting of a combination of the dimensions developed by Sauter (2004) and Van Maanen's (2004) interpretation of theatrical events and festivals, is utilised. The devised model allows this study to meticulously examine the festival construct of the example festivals and highlight their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. I would also like to focus on the fact that, rather than just considering the threats of creating such a festival event, there are also exciting challenges facing TYP practitioners and organizers.

## **4.2 THE FESTIVAL FORMS EXPLORED**

The fundamental features of festivals have always been community, identity and the utilisation of space. It is important that the way in which society and festival organisers engage with these terms should shift and adapt to the socio-economic, geo-political and cultural environment in which these features are found and (re)created (Seffrin 2006: 16). It is clear that "[a]s we move into a new century, many of these roles and functions of the festival as it has operated historically have blurred, their impact becoming more nebulous" (Seffrin 2006: 17). In relation to young people in South Africa the preferred influence would be to invigorate their desire to attend theatrical performances and cultural practices as a choice of entertainment.

It is evident that festivals have a crucial function to play in a society's well-being and that the different models function in different ways. In this case the society, or rather the community, is young people and, due to the shifting nature of youth culture, it seems logical that the festival model should also be able to shift and adapt to the changing socio-economic, geo-political and cultural circumstances in which the heterogeneous group finds itself.

This chapter seeks to engage specifically with the ‘boutique’ festival form, which is categorised as a hybrid festival form, built on a mixture of characteristics derived from the major arts festivals and community arts festival model. It clearly is a model that could be implemented as it is able to adapt to and change with the ever-changing landscape that is youth culture. The following short discussion of the two latter forms serves to broaden knowledge of the features that characterise the boutique festival.

#### **4.2.1 The Community Arts and Major Arts Festival Models**

The community arts model has become a very popular model and “has strong ties to ancient festival traditions, in which people celebrated their specific communities, via stories, songs and rituals unique to them, encouraging them to harness a strong sense of identity” (Seffrin 2006: 2). What separates a community arts model from the major arts model is the fact that the participants are directly involved in the process of creating festival product. Their direct involvement fundamentally aims to empower the community and is the primary characteristic of the community arts festival model (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 70). The main agenda of this type of festival is to revel in a specific community’s uniqueness and history, and it is a way in which the community can “articulate its plight in a public manner” (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 16). The elements of *identity* and *history* of a festival becomes significant here, especially when working with teenagers. In order to give them a sense of ownership over the event as well as make identification possible the process of production needs to be revised to fit their unique way of cultural expression. Consequently the most noteworthy aspect of the community arts model is that the “target audience becomes, on so many levels, the authors themselves, thus intensifying the two-way communication between performer and the audience” (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 105). This is a notion that underpins the practices and processes of theatre practitioners working with young people and resonates with youth arts theory, to which I will return shortly.

The major arts festival model differs from community arts festivals and focuses rather on excess and excellence; it has some semblance with the “lofty cultural extravagances employed by kings, emperors and dictators” (Seffrin 2006: 2). The major arts festival

model operates in such a manner to “bring the world to local audiences via the inclusion of international productions, but also positions its audience as part of an international festival audience” (Seffrin 2006: 31). On the other hand, the boutique festival aims to engage with a specific audience with particular needs and desires, whereas programming in the major arts festival model “usually aims to cast as wide an aesthetic net as possible” (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 68). The audience is one of the most significant components of festivalisation, and it functions much more passively within the major arts festival model (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 72 – 73). In this environment audiences can draw from an assortment of sophisticated offerings from a programme that “is essentially the result of an Artistic Director’s singular vision unlike the community and boutique arts festival model where audiences are significantly involved in the processes of programming (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 72 – 73).

#### **4.2.2 Youth Arts Theory**

Before I continue to investigate the unique framework of the boutique festival, I would like to briefly return to and discuss the aspects of youth arts theory. This underlines the approach used by the organisers of the example festivals discussed in this chapter, and will be referred to in the next chapter to reveal areas of TYP in need of development in South Africa. The most significant underlying characteristic that youth arts theory is based upon, is the fact that young people should be seen as competent cultural contributors, as they are also culturally aware of their surroundings (Seffrin 2006: 19). The key theorists highlight the fact that youth audiences “are highly sophisticated and literate in terms of their ability to read and critique media and marketing” (Seffrin 2006: 20). Youth arts theory emphasises the fact that young people who participate in cultural practices, should be able to become authors of their own experiences, which is made possible via the community arts festival model. The biggest issue arising from this unique position of the audience, is that youth culture is not a homogenised phenomenon and, where the acceptance or rejection of certain cultural elements shapes their identities significantly, this is related to their patterns of consumption. “Youth culture therefore embodies a world where a blancmange of cultural movements and references are morphed, pastiched and mobilised through a relentless array of images” and indeed is an

important factor that organisers of a youth festival need to consider (Seffrin 2006: 21). It is due to this immense diversity within youth culture which applauds multiplicity that I argue that a festival is the best means to allow young people to engage in cultural activities and feel a sense of contributing to society (Seffrin 2006: 23). The polysystemic nature of the festival allows for a diverse range of performances and activities, so that every single young individual can feel involved with the festival experience (Seffrin 2006: 23). It should be noted, however, that even with the polysystemic attribute of a festival the aim and focus should be on diverse creativity and sociability otherwise the festival may come short of catering for all the needs of the heterogeneous group.

Youth theatre can undeniably have numberless positive influences on its young participants, and these aspects can be used to promote the many benefits that a youth festival can offer its participants. Involvement in the arts can create a greater open-mindedness in the participants and further their ability to understand and work with other people. This can allow them to make more friends and hone their people skills. Other benefits for young participants include capacity building to express and simply be themselves. Involvement in the arts will also result in a stronger aptitude to manage difficult/negative experiences, which might increase their level of happiness, and the recreational activities will largely keep them out of trouble. Finally, participation in the arts can improve their confidence and performance skills (Hughes & Wilson 2007: 66 – 67).

The philosophical underpinning that young people are competent enough to create their own experience and that they are significant cultural contributors, is what drives many producers of youth festivals and youth theatre. The manner in which they accomplish this sense of ownership amongst their young participants may vary from organisation to organisation, but the key features remain predominantly the same throughout the world. It also seems apparent that in order to create youth theatre successfully, a hybridisation of community arts and traditional (major) arts practices needs to be effected. The processes and practices used by organisers of a boutique festival seem to maintain this balance successfully and will be investigated in this chapter.

### 4.2.3 The Boutique Festival Model

The boutique festival operates somewhere between the two models mentioned above and “draws on current cultural readings of the contemporary world” (Seffrin 2006: 3). The boutique festival can be regarded as an event that accommodates a specific type of audience and is organised by people with distinct expertise and understanding about the target audience (Seffrin 2007: 68). It is ultimately a model that profiles work from a local perspective as they consume and respond to cultural trends globally (Seffrin 2006: 31). The boutique festival model employs elements from the traditional models, but it

... also carves out a new festival space that opens up insight into the role of the festival in the contemporary world, both as a cultural aesthetic tool and as a means of social and cultural exploration (Seffrin 2006: 3).

This particular festival model seeks to create dialogue with specific audiences, and programmes the festival experience via a comprehensive consultation process, reflecting the processes utilised by the community arts festival model (Seffrin 2006: 8). The importance of quality is emphasised as well, “and its ability to engage with contemporary cultural issues” reflects the philosophical approach of major arts festivals (Seffrin 2006: 8).

When considering the notions of youth arts theory, it becomes evident that when producing a festival for a big and diverse group of teenagers the hybridisation of various festival models needs to be formed in order to adapt and shift as the youth culture does. The fact remains that the artistic forms employed by young people are able to subvert or redeploy mainstream traditions, thus creating a new form of cultural expression. Due to the structures and processes involved in creating a boutique festival young people are allowed to operate on their own terms (Seffrin 2006: 20).

The key spheres of influence here are the processes of cultural consumption, the relationship with key cultural forms and critiques of them, the redeployment of public space, the privileging of diversity (sexual, political, cultural, aesthetic) and the impact of technology (Seffrin 2006: 20).



Due to the flexible manner in which a boutique festival operates, it is able to engage with all these elements. The research explores a specific festival model implemented within a particular organisational and institutional space which provides an exploration of the genre as a whole (Seffrin 2006: 3). By thoroughly examining the various aspects of the festival, using the integrated model of Sauter's and Van Maanen's theories, the manner in which the boutique festival model creates *communitas* and flow can be revealed.

The boutique festival examples that are analysed in this chapter present new forms of cultural engagement "via processes of consultation and the manner in which audiences are engaged" (Seffrin 2006: 171). The chief concept of audiences being the creators of their own festival experience has considerable consequences within the playing culture of the festival. The festival becomes a means of generating a dialogue with participants, which gives practitioners a different version of cultural expression from that of the community arts or major arts festival models. The boutique festival model is built upon elements from both these conventional festival constructs, yet functions in an alternative cultural framework because the audience is also positioned as producers (Seffrin 2006: 171). It is the unique conjoint balance "of quality of process and involvement, and quality of product that places the festival in a significant position" (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 70).

The unique positioning of the audience has extensively relevant influences; in that it blurs the boundaries between the different frames discussed in the previous chapter even more. In relation to the foregrounding principle and seeing that the audience is directly involved in shaping their own festival experience within the boutique festival model, it is arguable that a peak-experience can be evoked more easily than is the case with other festival models. It can then be deduced that the festival experience will most probably be meaningful for its audience in a different way as is the case with the other festival models, and this might cause the audience to come back to have this type of experience again and perhaps also aid in audience development.

### **4.3. STAGE X and OUT OF THE BOX – Exemplary Boutique Festivals for Young People**

The notion that the audience has a direct influence on the form and content of the theatrical event is especially relevant when working with young people. The manner in which this is relevant will be discussed later in this chapter in the section dealing with the youth as audience. The primary focus of the study is the Stage X<sup>16</sup> festival held in Brisbane, Australia, which was specifically aimed at young people of the society and very successful in its organisation and execution. Although this study primarily focuses on festivals for young people between the ages of 15 and 18 (the target age group of Stage X), the OUT OF THE BOX<sup>17</sup> is also employed as an extension of the examination of the boutique festival model (Seffrin 2006: 15).

The Stage X festival was considered to be “a high profile, arts driven celebratory event that recognised the arts and cultural lives of young people” – important factors of youth arts theory (Richer quoted in Seffrin 2006: 106). The festival environment was exemplary of what a boutique festival is, with a magnitude of possibilities and positive impacts on the society in which it was held. The major success of the Stage X festival was the fact that they strongly incorporated youth arts theory into their management agendas. “[T]he degree of diversity within youth culture is fundamental. It is impossible to consider young people as a homogenised group: indeed, youth culture applauds multiplicity” (Seffrin 2006: 23). The festival environment encompasses a diverse range of social, cultural and aesthetic stimulation, and effortlessly functions as an all-inclusive structure.

The devised model from the previous chapters reveals an ample number of structures and processes that need to be taken into consideration to thoroughly examine the Stage X boutique festival model. The devised model will highlight the areas where the various characteristics that produce a festival influence each other and what impact this had on the playing culture and the creation of *communitas* and flow experience of the festival. The characteristics include government policies and support, “management programming

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<sup>16</sup> Aimed specifically at 13 – 26 age bracket (Seffrin 2006: 105).

<sup>17</sup> This festival is aimed specifically at children between the ages 3 and 6.

practices, and, most significantly, the philosophical underpinnings that drive the curation of these festival events”, and also the impact this has on the overall experience (Seffrin 2006: 8).

#### **4.3.1 The Societal Frame and Cultural Context of the Festival**

The previous chapter highlighted various societal elements that contribute to organising a successful festival. Three of the most influential components of a creative mechanism such as the festival, besides the target audience, are its organisers; public and private funding bodies, and the government – each bearing a significant weight in the execution of a successful festival.

Governments throughout the world are aware of the substantial impact the creative industry can have on the socio-political, geo-economic and cultural components of society, and realise that proper support is needed to establish and sustain the status of the creative industry within a society. This is the first aspect to be discussed, as governments are more than often the most remote element to influence and impact the organisation a festival. Governments can support their creative industries, specifically the TYP industry in this case, in either or both of the following ways:

firstly, a recognition of the importance of Theatre for Children and Young People through various policy documents; and secondly, specific funding (or other forms of financial support) for this sector of the performing arts (Pretorius 2008: 17).

The way in which the Australian government supports its TYP demonstrates how both these components of support are utilised (Pretorius 2008: 18). Australian TYP is supported not only through policy documents stating government’s support of performing arts for specifically young people, but also through specified and generous funding grants aimed at promoting the creation of various art forms aimed at children and young people. These types of policies and grant allocations are also common in other countries such as the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherlands (Pretorius 2008: 17). It should be noted that many governments do not “directly intervene in the content or running of performing arts”; they just provide “a [more] favourable environment” (Pretorius 2008:

17). In Australia these policies and funding grants are in action at national, regional and local government levels.

Yet it is not only a favourable government policy and funding that guarantee the widespread creation of theatre for young people. There are other elements – over which government has little control – to take into consideration, such as the agendas of private funding bodies supporting the festival; or the aims of organisers and the people they employ. These are aspects which will also be examined.

The second aspect to be examined, is the political aims and reputation of board members and other people involved in the festival, such as the festival organisers, and the theatre companies and their practitioners who present work at the festival. Various councils can be put in place to ensure the proper execution of policy papers and distribution of funding, as is the case in Australia. An organisation called the Programming Unit organised and produced the Stage X festival, and finds itself in a very “interesting position, in that it is part of a heavily funded government organisation”, viz. the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) (Seffrin 2006: 29). Here we see an exceptionally direct socio-political connection between the government body and the actual individuals (organisers) involved in executing the event. The dynamics that develop between these two parties will also influence how the festival is produced and what its overall objective is. This is an interesting configuration, as the youth festival is organised by a hierarchical, and arguably conservative, elitist channels of government via a statutory body. Yet the methods used by the Programming Unit to produce a festival are, unlike a major arts festival model which tries to reach a large audience base and leans more towards a community arts festival model, due to a consultative process which is incorporated in the planning and execution of the festival. This aspect will still be discussed in full.

The framework utilised by the Queensland Performing Arts Council (QPAC) and the Programming Unit for executing the boutique festival model was heavily apprised by explorations made by findings of key theorists of youth arts theory (Wolfgang Schneider, Henri Giroux, Douglas Rushkoff, Jonathan Epstein) and popular culture (Richard Florida,

Charles Leadbeater, Pat Kane). They identify that underlying issues of social justice, viz. areas of access, inclusivity, consultation and the positioning of young people, both children and adolescents as culturally aware and culture makers, already are key elements when working with young people (Seffrin 2006: 19). The managerial structure and political aims of the Programming Unit are organised in such manner that it creates a dialogue between them as organisers of the festival and the young people who consume the festival.

The reputation of board members and organisers of the Stage X festival is highly respectable. The Artistic Director of the Programming Unit of the Stage X festival currently is Susan Richer. She is also a QPAC staff member and her “methodology focuses on regarding children as audiences and artists in their own right, not as potential audiences for future ‘adult’ aesthetics. In the 2002 OUT OF THE BOX<sup>18</sup> festival programme Richer states that “much of the cultural product presented to children is sanitised, ‘dumbed down’ and overtly didactic. *Out-of-the-Box* exists to provide children with sophisticated creative experiences that connect with their ‘cultural lives’” (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 71).

As far as her reputation goes, the following:

Richer’s background in Drama Education ensures that she draws on a wealth of professional experience through which to shape her festival philosophy ... This has created a process of festival production that builds essentially from the ‘ground up’, meaning that young children are actively engaged from the earliest stages of the event’s conception and programming, in a process of consultation that crystallises what their interests are and what concerns them (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 71).

Another fundamental aspect to consider in the festival frame, is the demographics of the festival audience. The youth community and their diverse and ever-changing cultural milieu form an entity that is constantly changing, shifting and adapting to the multi-

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<sup>18</sup> Susan Richer is also the Artistic Director for this festival, and her philosophies do not differ from the festivals’ socio-political aims.

faceted popular trends and practices that transpire globally and, inevitably, locally. This is evident in Van Maanen's interpretation of the societal frame, viz. that changes which occur within this frame are, and need to be, reflected in the festival construct. It should also be considered, as stated earlier, that the youth community is a heterogeneous group with different needs and interests.

In her study, *Emerging Trends in Contemporary Festival Practice* (2006), Georgia Seffrin identifies a set of key strategies that the Programming Unit used to create these smaller non-mainstream festivals specifically for young people. The Programming Unit aims "to connect with their target audiences of young people, in a manner significantly different to the conventional arts festival" models (Seffrin 2006: 102 – 103). The Programming Unit conducts "a detailed process of consultation ... in a variety of groups who are stakeholders in the resultant festival, the most significant group being the target audience itself" via direct discussions or social media platforms (Seffrin 2006: 119). This method, which is investigated later in this chapter, is able to "empower audiences [because] the processes of the festival production and programming (in which target audiences are heavily involved) positions the festival as dialogue between producers and audiences", instead of regarding the audiences "essentially as consumers, as occurs with more traditional [major] arts festival renderings (Seffrin 2006: 103). This element of the Programming Unit is extended into all the areas of the Stage X festival's components.

The idea of the target audience authoring its own festival experience is evident in the creative processes that involve the management and organisation of "designers, technical crew, marketing teams, bureaucrats, caterers, and, most crucially, the commissioned artists and target audience" (Seffrin 2006: 129 – 130). This process of consulting and engaging with the target audience, undertaken by the Programming Unit, redesigns the festival's processes so that audiences produce and consume their experience at the same time (Seffrin 2006: 172). This enables participants to "connect significantly with contemporary patterns of cultural production and consumption" (Seffrin 2006: 172). Essentially this dialogue between the organisers and the audience significantly blurs the boundaries of the festival dimensions and frames, as discerned by Sauter (2004) and Van Maanen (2004). A more in-depth discussion of the consultative methods the organisers

and other stakeholders employ in order to accomplish a sense of unity, or rather *communitas*, within the youth's diversity during the festival experience, follows later in this chapter.

Clearly the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals have a positive influence on the city of Brisbane. These types of festivals contribute significantly to the cultural lives of young people and to the cultural dynamics of the whole city (Seffrin 2006 161). It also significantly adds to the way young artists view the host city. Through being involved in producing a festival, young artists could view the host city as "a more acceptable place to live and create, rather than feeling necessarily inferior to [other] more sophisticated" locations elsewhere (Seffrin 2006: 162).

Within this theoretical framework of the festival it is also necessary to mention the involvement with media resources. Currently young people are more than ever engaged with new media. The media have become an integral part of their everyday lives and need to be thoroughly examined. Not only should new media be regarded as a means to communicate ideas and market the event, but it should be included into the performances themselves. There is an increase in the practice of multi-media performances and the success of these types of performances amongst young people is undeniable. The Arena Theatre Company in Australia, which uses the same management model the Stage X festival used, can be seen as an example. This company has created "interdisciplinary work such as *Skid 180*, which combines theatre and BMX racing, and *Confessions of a troubled mind dot com*, which uses multiple stages, music and video games to tell the tale of four teenagers' troubled relationship" (Pretorius 2008: 23 – 24). The use of technology in band performances in contemporary societies has increased greatly and undoubtedly is something that needs to be used when organising an event for young people.

Thus, to conclude the example of the Stage X festivals' dimensions, to use Sauter's (2004) term, is exemplary as it is

produced by a government statutory board, growing specifically out of government policy, and was highly constructed and curated by a team of arts

professionals, with more of an aim than mere enjoyment, even though this was a key consideration (Seffrin 2006: 140).

Furthermore, in accordance with youth arts theory, the organisers succeeded in building a trustworthy and “meaningful dialogue with the audience” via the consultation processes, as well as produce a pleasurable festival environment that celebrated the cultural interests of young people (Seffrin 2006: 140). The festival’s objectives were achieved and the organisers and managers were able “to assist in the development of a broader context that empowers young people’s cultural interest; to utilise art-making that accommodates flexible definitions and boundaries; and to stimulate a culture of learning” (Richer quoted in Seffrin 2006: 113).

#### **4.3.2 Organisers, Management and the Audience: Conventions and Practices Used to Create a Playing Culture**

It is in this area of the devised model that the boundaries between Sauter’s dimensions and Van Maanen’s frames become significantly blurred due to the positioning of the audience as both producer and consumer of the festival. Besides the philosophy and work ethic of QPAC and the Programming Unit in producing the Stage X festival, there are other practitioners to take into consideration as well. A discussion follows that looks into the key strategies employed by the QPAC organisation and its artistic, organisational and structural conventions; as well as the structures and processes of other parties (such as commissioned theatre companies) involved to produce peak-experiences for the young festival participants of Stage X.

Theorists<sup>19</sup> of youth arts theory clearly emphasises the importance of regarding young people as contributors to a society’s cultural processes and structures. There are numerous ways in which TYP practitioners engage theatrically with young people. All TYP practitioners’ work, which pursues the above philosophy, ensures that young participants maintain their position as authors of their own experience by working in a

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<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Schneider (1997) (2004) (2007), Henri Giroux (1998) , Jonathan Epstein (1998), Andy Furlong (2009)



very close proximity with young peoples ideas, values and interests. Many practitioners, however, argue about the function of TYP and whether it should be product-orientated or process-orientated. Yet the emphasis on a quality experience runs throughout all TYP practices, no matter what form or philosophy they utilise.

This discussion should give deeper understanding of the processes and practices utilised by the Programming Unit. It not only engages with young people in workshop processes to produce single events. The Programming Unit is an exceptional example of how organisers and practitioners of youth arts should function. The methods they utilise, allow young people to be

involved in many areas of festival production: programming, design, venue suitability, ticketing strategies, and so on, to ensure that the connection with the target audience is real and not just loosely based on questionnaires and anecdotes (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 105).

TYP companies in Australia utilise various methods to enable their target audience to be engaged in the production processes of an event or festival. Young people contribute “through websites, creative development sessions, by visiting rehearsals or sitting on steering committees” (Mack 2007: 14). The various strategies used by the Programming Unit to engage with their young target market in order to empower them and give them a voice within society, will now be investigated. It is the unique approach of the Programming Unit in relation to the contextual theatricality and playing culture dimensions, which enhances the overall experience that young participants enjoy during the festivals. This is indeed one of the strengths of the boutique festival model and gives rise to a multitude of opportunities.

One of the key elements to have ensured that the Stage X festival was executed successfully, was the Program Unit’s *management model*. Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that the Programming Unit engages in a dialogue with its target audience. I would like to explore the structure of the Programming Unit first and then examine the consultative practice they employ in more depth.

The first most prominent feature of the Programming Unit is the position of the Artistic Director, Susan Richer, for both the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals. The Unit deems the traditional model of production of an Artistic Director that dictates programming, as inappropriate for an event aimed at young people. Appointing a high-profile Artistic Director “whose vision drove the programming, and whose profile assisted in drawing the sizeable amounts of funding to programme dazzling international performances” is seen as unworkable for a festival aimed at young people (Seffrin 2006: 107). The Programming Unit employs a much more collaborative approach, thus it differs from the more traditional approach usually utilised with adult arts festivals. The Unit consists of an Executive Producer; a Creative Director; a Programme Manager/General Manager<sup>20</sup>; “as well as a small team of producers and technical staff, and a core of young arts workers with particular skills in areas such as design, production and specific art forms” (Seffrin 2006: 129). The members of this team who engage with young people are “flexible enough to allow frameworks that are transparent and that can accommodate change, and being ethical, by ensuring that promises can be delivered” (Seffrin 2006: 110). It should be mentioned that the QPAC made use of different administrative models before the inauguration of the Stage X festival. The model used for the boutique festivals “grew out of these previous experiences, so that there was a core who had worked together over a number of years, developing a strong sense of protocol and practice” (Seffrin 2006: 130).

It is clear that the organisational team’s “combined knowledge, experience and history together within this process of protocol, meant that it defined an effective model of festival production” (Seffrin 2006: 129). A model that successfully positions young people as viable cultural contributors and empowers them, is a vital part of ensuring their committed attendance at arts festivals, thus ensuring their sustainability. It has already been noted that the impact of festivals on the host city is mostly positive and this can be a vital cultural contributor to the South African society; this will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>20</sup> For Stage X they employ a Programme Manager, and for OUT OF THE BOX a General Manager, the same person held this position for both the 1999 and 2001 Stage X festivals as well as the 2000 OUT OF THE BOX festival (Seffrin 2006).

There are, of course, many challenges that accompany this flat management model; one of which is that “clear role specifications and acknowledgement are often blurred, and with contracted staff, the essential need to match the person to the job, can prove difficult” (Seffrin 2006: 131). In order to overcome this challenge the Unit constantly monitors the state of affairs by modifying and improving resources and organisational structures as needed. This form of fluidity is a key aspect of a successful management model, as the Unit is able to renegotiate “its structures, positions and working relationships” (Seffrin 2006: 4). The fact that members of the core team have worked together for an extensive period of time, can largely counteract any disadvantageous elements (Seffrin 2006: 132).

Richer and her organisational team have developed several practices to guarantee an efficient dialogue with their young target audience. Seffrin shortly describes these strategies as

[an] engagement in two-way communication, by talking to young people rather than at them, and disseminating information via channels that they trust. The prizing of eccentricity and diversity is a further practice, realised by exploring less obvious creative solution[s], and listening to those who have been largely denied a voice or presence in mainstream cultural practice (Seffrin 2006: 110).

According to Richer, “allowing young people to [self-]narrate within safe and appropriate contexts provides more information about their interests, values and tastes than any amount of market research” (Richer quoted in Seffrin 2006: 110). This is a very important and significant frame of mind for an Artistic Director of a youth festival to have, as she clearly takes an active interest in youth culture and theory to develop a proficient learning culture (Seffrin 2006: 110). All these elements are crucial in ensuring that youth audiences experience moments of significance which are highly valued.

Youth culture is constantly shifting and it can be a challenge to keep up with new trends. In order to remain up-to-date with emerging youth cultural practices, the Programming Unit engages in thorough research or *consultation processes* which are the next two

prominent features of the Programming Unit's festival model (Seffrin 2006: 109). The needs, desires and practices are established by investigating an assortment of sources which include: "internet sites, (...) magazines and youth publications, [as well as] the work of and with young people themselves, especially artists" (Seffrin 2006: 109). This meticulous process enables the Programming Unit to create a meaningful connection with the young participants and gives them insight into "what trends and issues they were addressing or dismissing" (Seffrin 2006: 109).

The Unit's thorough consultation process and discussions occur amongst a diverse selection of stakeholders of the festival – from young artists, teachers and youth arts organisations to the target audience, the latter being the most important group (Seffrin 2006: 119 & 120).

Stage X, for example, engaged with various students from high schools and universities as well as with other arts practitioners. Arguably this compact demography cannot represent all young people, but it can bring numerous dominant factors to light (Seffrin 2006: 122).

Unlike the research processes and management practices employed by more conventional festival organisers that mostly just send out surveys asking participants' opinions, the Programming Unit converses respectfully with the young stakeholders and participants of the upcoming festival (Seffrin 2006: 112). From these rigorous conversations the assorted ideas that the organisers were exploring, could be tested and bounced off the young stakeholders.

This enabled the organisers of the Stage X festival to reach a more sophisticated understanding of the way the target audience experienced the Brisbane society, and the manner the festival could pertain to those experiences to eventually "illuminate them and even transform them" (Seffrin 2006: 125). The consultation process with a diverse range of stakeholders was significantly connected to the creative and aesthetic experiences of young audiences from various schools. This significantly informed the programming of the festival which was "created as a result of the issues expressed by young people, [and]

married with the team's shaping of themes and resonances" (Seffrin 2006: 125). Thus festival programming was based upon the contemporary "issues articulated by children themselves, and those who worked with them" (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 72).

*Programming* is the next prominent feature of the OUT OF THE BOX festival and the former Stage X festival. Due to the consultation processes employed by the Programming Unit, they were able to create a festival environment and experience that was relevant and appealing to their target audience.

This in turn debatably intensified the flow experience associated with the playing culture of the festival and heightened the sense of *communitas* amongst participants; these are crucial elements in organising a successful festival. The diverse program "always featured a blend of commissioned works, in-school projects, workshops and the programming of quality works by professional youth arts companies" (Seffrin 2006: 108). The flexible structure of the Programming Unit and the consultation process ensured that the content and form of each festival were extensively associated with the young participants' cultural needs and practices. This leads me to the next feature which can be associated with the success of the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals, the *organisation of place/space*. This is the final aspect that could influence the overall experience of the festival.

#### **4.3.2.1 The Festival's Utilisation and Transformation of Space**

The space created for the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals is naturally shaped through the consultation process with the audiences and other stakeholders. As discussed these parties form an integral of the overall festival experience by being "deeply connected to the entire process of festival production, through consultation and interaction with the actual programming" (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al 2007: 78). Clearly a festival that is placed and shaped within such a "context creates a significant public space in which the creativity and cultural lives of children can be articulated and profiled" (Seffrin in Hauptfleisch et al. 2007: 78). The use of space and the methods applied in order to produce an engaging environment for young participants relate

strongly to the shifting nature of youth culture and should be able to make provision for young audiences to physically and philosophically occupy the festival site (Seffrin 2006: 165). Seffrin states that what became apparent from her studies is that amongst young people there was a “sense that ... the city of Brisbane [became] a far more acceptable environment to live, play and work in” (Seffrin 2006: 164). This plainly reveals that when a festival is successful, it can directly attribute to a “sense of pride, celebration and consultation of community”, and this improvement is linked to the utilization of space during the festival (Seffrin 2006: 164)

These conventions and methods discussed, obviously enhance and strengthen the relationship that exists between practitioners and audience members. It is apparent that the various societal, institutional and organisational frames, as discerned by Van Maanen (2004), influence and impact upon the communicative frame at the heart of the festival. Unlike other festival models where the participants only communicate, meet and unite within the theatrical playing dimension, the boutique festival model establishes a strong relationship with the various partners long before the here-and-now-experience takes place. The significant blurring of festival boundaries and spaces due to the distinctive position of the young audience enables them to be much more aware of how they are influenced by, and shape their own festival experience. The fact is that the young audience mostly created the experience and space for themselves even before they started consuming it.

A look at the key factors at the core of the communicative experience should further highlight the benefits of the environment created by the boutique festival model for all the people involved.

#### **4.3.3 The Communication taking place within the Theatrical Playing Dimension**

The hybrid nature of the boutique festival emphasises the theoretical groundwork on which the communicative processes of festivalisation are based. Firstly the audience is directly involved in the organisation and creation of the festival and the festival experience. Secondly, through the proper guidance and execution, on behalf of the

organisers, the quality of the festival should be outstanding. This, in turn, will lead to a peak-experience for the audience and inevitably produce meaningful experiences for the audience until long after the event has passed. This heading specifically refers to the Stage X festivals of 1999 and 2001 as examples to investigate the core communicative experience during the festival.

There are a few key components that audience members encounter within the space and duration of a theatrical event which they need to interpret and with which they need to identify. This is exemplified during the festival experience, as festival participants are faced with a massive amount of signifiers that stimulate them perceptually, cognitively and emotionally<sup>21</sup>; and each communicating something different. I can imagine that this can be a confusing and daunting experience for a novice festival goer, as I have been one myself in my youth when I attended a major arts festival. Yet if I, as a novice, were introduced to a different kind of festival experience during my teenage years, such as one created by utilising the boutique festival model, my first experience of a festival might not have been such an over-stimulated one. This is where the Stage X festival model can succeed in attracting new audiences, as the unique positioning of the audience as author goes “against the traditional model of the Artistic Director as auteur; and this creates a very different kind of festival experience for audiences” (Seffrin 2006: 139). An experience that is more inviting and not over-stimulating and less threatening is an experience with which a novice festival participant can identify on their own terms, and thus have a meaningful experience which they would like to have again.

The Stage X festival organisers concentrated on five features to ensure an enjoyable and memorable experience for its participants and which, in turn, can ensure the sustainability of the festival. These were *participation*, *emotional branding*, *consumerism*, *DIY & local arts* and *authenticity*. These features were seen to impact directly on the “young people’s relationship with cultural production and were employed as philosophical underpinnings” for the main events – also extensively informing programming and design (Seffrin 2006: 150). It has already been made very clear how the *participation* feature was utilised by

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<sup>21</sup> Refers to Eversmann’s audience reception model in *Theatrical Events: Borders, Dynamics, Frames* (2004).

the Programming Unit, viz. by “breaking down the barriers between audience and performers (...) challenging notions of what constitutes an artist and an audience” (Seffrin 2006: 150). The target audience and its distinctive position produced and influenced the other features.

The Stage X festival could be seen to create its own *emotional branding*, as the Programming Unit endeavoured to connect the festival “to a feeling or sense of fun, safety, participation and creativity, and in doing so the event created a tradition for itself” (Seffrin 2006: 150). The young audiences were seen as viable consumers and their needs, desires and habits were closely considered.

The new generation of young people use a multitude of new media in different ways and with various aims in mind. In contemporary society young people embody “the essence of the new consumer: power”, as they access and understand the assorted communicative instruments with more ease (Seffrin 2006: 151). In relation to the global trend ‘Think global, act local’ the *DIY* and *local arts* notions were facilitated by the Stage X festival by giving young artists and audiences in and around Brisbane the opportunity to be creative and produce their own experiences which fed into the *authentic* nature of the festival. Seffrin argues that “those people, places and products perceived as ‘real’, are valued more highly than those that are viewed as artificial or manufactured” (Seffrin 2006: 152). These features are evident and influence the communication taking place within the theatrical playing dimensions of the Stage X festivals. By examining the main events of the Stage X festivals of 1999 and 2001 it can be seen how the philosophies and approach of the Programming Unit manifested.

#### **4.3.3.1 Main Events Communicating the Festival’s Philosophy**

The 1999 Stage X festival’s main event was *Freakshow* and in 2001 the main event was *Shopping Mall*. Evidently the Programming Unit adapted the main event in relation to the shift in trends and practices within the young people’s culture. *Freakshow* consisted of 26 commissioned works that included a multitude of art forms, “sculptural installation, slide installations, performance artists, mud wrestlers, a ventriloquist, dancers and an acrobatic



freakshow with a stunt violinist” (Seffrin 2006: 141). The young artists were not given a specific brief by the festival’s producers, but works which the artists had already practiced, were commissioned; this connected strongly with the theme of the festival (Seffrin 2006: 141 – 142). Furthermore, the artists were only limited by practical and budgetary constraints, and by the fact that their work was not allowed to be racist or sexually offensive (Seffrin 2006: 142). *Shopping Mall* also consisted of numerous art and performance pieces that resonated with the new theme of parodying consumerism. Both these events gave young people the opportunity to engage with a vast range of performance forms and highlighted issues concerning identity and community. Furthermore it provided the young participants with the locus of power and control in a space in which their opinions and values were the focus of attention.

It is through the festival that young people have the opportunity to “effect change in areas of social and cultural policy” (Seffrin 2006: 177). Seffrin’s research clearly reveals that the notions of identity, community and space were thoroughly engaged with by the young participants. A sense and feeling of temporary *communitas* were created among participants, which is a crucial aspect for the theatrical playing dimension. Furthermore, due to the density of the festival space during the main events and the concentration of activities, it can be strongly argued that participants underwent a flow experience during the festival.

The Programming Unit interviewed audience members during the festivals in order to determine whether the festivals were a success. From these interviews it was clear that the festival experience was positive overall – arguably owing to the rigorous prerequisite processes that the Programming Unit took on with the young artists and the target audience. Aspects which did result in bad experiences didn’t fall under the organisers’ jurisdiction, but organisers could learn from those experiences and improve on them. This was done by evaluating each festival during and after it was being held to determine the strengths and weaknesses. This evaluation process will be discussed shortly.

Negative comments were similar [in] both years, and focused largely on logistical issues such as the small number of toilets available, and the security procedures

for obtaining alcohol frustrated many. However, when catering for the 13 – 26 age bracket, the issues of access to alcohol will always be problematic (Seffrin 2006: 164).

#### **4.3.4 The Evaluation Process**

The Programming Unit's evaluation "focused most significantly on whether the festivals had engaged audiences, on both a philosophical and aesthetic level, rather than primarily employing ticket sales and audience numbers as exclusive measures of success" (Seffrin 2006: 153). These statistics though were not overlooked, but the Programming Unit rather observed financial constraints and reduced quantity of resources as creating a more tense environment, yet they were still able to produce a programme of high quality and density with a smaller budget (Seffrin 2006: 153). Evidently the Programming Unit continues in further reflection and analysis so that the festival's processes can be "monitored, re-focused, and re-articulated so that each event connect[s] with its target audience, while keeping abreast of shifts both in youth culture and in young people's cultural experience" (Seffrin 2006:154 – 155). Once again the Programming Unit's strategies and fluidity as a team reveal the strength of the boutique festival model as a form that is able to thoroughly engage with young people and their cultural trends and practices.

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

The Programming Unit's commitment to the strategies discussed in this chapter, resulted in the festivals for young people to be grounded and connected, so that the events were meaningful for the audiences in ways that would not have been workable had the more traditional model of arts festival been employed (Seffrin 2006: 154). To summarise, these strategies were first to research current trends in youth culture, to reveal expert knowledge of issues pertaining to youth arts theory, and to supplement these with a rigorous consultation process. The insights gained through these processes were then married into the programming. The management model of the Programming Unit consists of a key team and utilises a democratic management process which seems to be ideal for

the sustainability of a boutique festival. Positioning the audience as both producer and consumer is extremely significant and efficient when producing events for young people. Finally, evaluating the festival enables the Programming Unit to correct mistakes and develop the festival constantly (Seffrin 2006).

Through my research it is evident that the hybridisation of festival models is becoming more popular.

The current cultural climate can accommodate and is in fact enhanced by a range of festival models that can respond to [the] increasingly fragmentary nature of contemporary renderings of community, which is the currency of [a] festival (Seffrin 2006: 248).

These contemporary festival renderings can be regarded as dominant cultural forms, seeing they are able to engage with matters surrounding identity, community, place and consumption, all of which are fundamental to many, if not all, modern-day audience demographics confronted with constant change and the acceleration of globalisation and technology in their lives (Seffrin 2006: 249). It is also clear that “the intellectual, artistic or emotional satisfaction that theatre (...) offers, is no longer adequate for most people; they want more” (Seffrin 2006: 17). Festivals can no longer just offer an artistic experience, as people wish to socialise as well; they want to “communicate and experience something special together” and practitioners need to realise this and adapt to ensure a successful event (Seffrin 2006: 17).

What has become evident from the examples above, is the fact that the companies that organise these festivals, or the companies that are involved in staging performances at these festivals, enjoy government support on two levels: firstly they receive funding from the government which is, secondly, supported by the policies instated by the country’s government. Furthermore the attitude or rather the frame of mind of the various stakeholders – from the government to the organisers, TYP companies and other arts practitioners – are aware of the positive impacts that youth festivals can have on the young people involved and how this can only benefit the future of the country. The idea

is that theatre, or as a matter of fact any creative performance, should enable young people to communicate with one another; to push the boundaries of the mediums they are working in; to establish new relationships; to have a sense of ownership, as well as a feeling of contribution to the wider society in which they live. Ultimately, it gives young people a sense of belonging, as well as a purpose to be active members of society rather than just be 'seen' and not 'heard'.

Creative expression for young people allows them to voice their opinions, makes them feel like they matter as well, and that what they and their peers are experiencing, is of use and can benefit society. But young people cannot do this on their own, they do not yet possess the skills and knowledge to execute and produce a platform for themselves. I believe it is the duty of adults to give young people a platform that allows them to express themselves emotionally, cognitively, philosophically, aesthetically, *et cetera*. And it should not be for the benefit of the adults alone, or produced according to their desires, but according to the ways the young people see fit and proper. That is why I strongly agree with and promote the methods and approaches of organisations such as the Programming Unit, or companies such as the Arena Theatre Company that create work for young people. By constantly involving them directly in the processes of creating a performance or festival, young people identify the current trends in their culture for the festival organisers. Finally, they incorporate these findings into an appropriate festival programme which fully addresses all their cultural needs, interests and values through using a range of art forms - from drama to music, to sports entertainment and general fun activities.

Young people in South Africa are yet to experience such a festival. Although there are several examples of theatrical experiences that they can attend if they wish, it is clear that none of these experiences come close to the Stage X or OUT OF THE BOX festivals. The following chapter investigates the various challenges that TYP organisers and practitioners need to face in South Africa and what has been produced within this challenging environment.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **EVALUATING LOCAL TYP TRENDS AND PRACTICES**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter seeks to examine the state of TYP trends and practices in the Western Cape and to compare it to international trends and practices. The socio-economic, geo-political and cultural environment in which TYP practitioners and organisers have to produce performances and/or festivals is examined and discussed, highlighting elements that need development. From the start it is clear that the cultural context within which the South African TYP practices finds itself, is very different from countries such as Australia and Europe, and it is evident that there are areas of TYP in South Africa that are in dire need of significant development. The types of TYP activities studied within this chapter are not all-encompassing, but have been examined by the researcher, as participant, over the course of three years. The research investigated trends and practices that showed the most similarity to a festival and not just a single performance event. The various activities are used as case studies to examine the broad field of operation of TYP in the Western Cape.

The first and most striking concern is that there is not a single arts festival in South Africa that functions like the boutique model investigated in the previous chapter. It is a disheartening fact and makes the task of comparing international TYP festival trends and practices to South Africa's industry rather complicated.

#### **5.2 CULTURAL CONTEXT AND THE SOCIETAL FRAME OF SOUTH AFRICA's TYP INDUSTRY**

In order to fully comprehend why the TYP industry in South Africa has not yet flourished into being as successful as the model examined in the previous chapter, the research utilises the devised theoretical model of festivals to investigate the various dimensions that produce TYP locally. The research firstly focuses on the environment within which

professional theatre operates, and examines the transformational relationship between the arts and the South African government after the major post-Apartheid changes. Due to major shifts in government, and its change in official policies and funding structures for the arts industry, practitioners were challenged to adapt and create new paths to sustain the industry in a radically changing society. TYP organisations and practitioners had to follow suit. This led to the emergence of the current TYP practices and trends which are a far cry from the theatrical model investigated in the previous chapter – mainly because of the weakening of fundamental socio-political and cultural structures.

### **5.2.1 The Transformation of Government Policies and Funding**

The radical changes in political, social and cultural thinking in the world, and in Africa in particular, over the past [thirty] years have not only changed the way theatre and the arts function in such societies, but has also fundamentally affected the way we view such activities (Hauptfleisch 1997: 9-10).

Before 1994 South Africa had four provinces and each had a professional Performing Arts Council operating in well-equipped theatres. These production houses were financially supported by “four generously state-subsided Performing Arts Councils (PACs)” (Van Heerden 2008: 20). In 1996 the new state policy for governing and subsidising the performing arts was formalised, and it had a major ripple effect on the way the performing arts were produced in South Africa. It led to the creative production entities within the four PACs being disbanded, their facilities and infrastructure becoming available for rent which effectively changed their function to “playhouses” or “receiving houses” instead of being production companies (Van Heerden 2008: 21). The fact of the matter is that the restructuring of the PACs occurred “in such a way that a number of key companies were closed down” and “their often highly experienced staff [was] retrenched, resulting in a loss of valuable skills” (Van Heerden 2008: 22). This is a matter that is crucial to the boutique festival model, where experienced and skilled practitioners can pass on their expertise to the next generation. Besides this organisational setback, other areas were also affected by the socio-political shift.

A look into the government policies in the new democracy reflects how theatre-makers had to alter their production strategies due to tighter financial grants. The national government no longer took the primary responsibility for funding the PACs and their activities. Prior to 1994 the four PACs were the primary recipients of national public funding, absorbing almost 50% the budget of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). In the final year of their existence (1995 – 1996), the PACs received a very high state subsidy – R112 million (Republic of South Africa, Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 1996). Yet, in the course of the next three years the PACs' subsidies from central government declined and by the end of that period government only subsidised “the core staff and essential activities of the PACs” (Department of Arts and Culture 1996 Online).

After this period the PACs – just like any other independent company – had to apply for funding from the National Arts Council (NAC) which came into being in 1997. The DAC furthermore stated that “[p]rovinces and local municipalities in which [the PACs] are located, should play a more active funding role, since it is their inhabitants who benefit most from the presence of the PACs” (Republic of South Africa, Department of Arts and Culture 1996 Online). This is not necessarily a bad point of view, yet the decline in subsidy money is very disheartening.

The new policies instated with the inception of the NAC highlight numerous challenges that TYP organisations and practitioners need to face to receive funding. The principal vision and mission statement of the DAC has continually been altered over the past two decades and currently aims “to develop and preserve South African culture to ensure social cohesion and nation building” (Republic of South Africa, Department of Arts and Culture 1996 Online). It had a significant impact upon the structural conventions of every company and organisation. As with the countries mentioned in the previous chapter, the DAC also functions as a halfway-house for publicly funded arts organisations and does not interfere with their work – which is a positive attribute. Looking to the future, the new policy documents make it clear that the government's ultimate concerns regarding Arts and Culture is that of promotion and, furthermore, “projects such as community arts centres, arts and education training, the support of festivals, and arts in prisons”

(Pretorius 2008: 30). These new policies and funding structures are regulated by the NAC and its principle task is

to distribute funds for artists, cultural institutions, NGOs and CBOs ... to promote the creation, teaching and dissemination of literature, oral history and story telling, music, dance, musical theatre, opera, photography, design, visual art and crafts which fully reflect our diversity (Republic of South Africa, Department of Arts and Culture 1996 Online).

Besides having to compete with other art forms to receive funding, the DAC's "focus on the youth, [and] the projects launched for them do not necessarily include [the specific] advancement and creation of theatre, but rather falls under the banner of broader social development and education" (Pretorius 2008: 30). Furthermore, there is also no distinction between mainstream theatre and TYP or children's theatre in the government's policy documents, distancing the TYP practitioners even more from funding (Pretorius 2008: 31 – 32). The South African TYP industry is in a weakened state, for, in relation to international TYP practices and trends, a balance between entertainment and education; aesthetic and pedagogic; and process and product needs to be maintained for TYP to be potentially effective and influential, and, at the same time, entertaining and of high quality. Obviously this is a very hard balance to find and maintain without proper funding and support.

Naturally the major concern for the first decade of the South African democracy was that the new arts policies were not practically implemented as originally planned. Van Heerden states:

[T]he Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSa) published a detailed critical analysis of the actual state of funding that went into the former PACs subsequent to 1996 and came to the conclusion that the White Paper guidelines had not been followed and set objectives not achieved after ten years (Van Heerden 2008: 21).

Even though the "annual budget of the NAC had more than quadrupled from R10 million to R42 million over the seven financial years from 1997/98 to 2003/04", the arts industry



was still struggling (Van Heerden 2008: 47). Added to this, is the fact that funding is now divided among nine provinces and consequently becomes easily depleted. In a paper published in the *South African Theatre Journal* (SATJ) in 2001, ‘Playing the changes: Thoughts on the restructuring of the theatrical system and the arts industry in South Africa after Apartheid’, Keith Bain and Temple Hauptfleisch disclose that

[t]oday, state funding for the arts has dwindled significantly and much of the little money that there is, finds itself administered by politicians and bureaucrats who are apparently out of touch with the cultural and artistic aspirations of both theatre practitioners and theatre-goers. ... Today, there is an urgent need to balance the interest of what is an essentially elitist social activity with the need to contribute to the cultural development of the nation as a whole (Bain & Hauptfleisch 2001: 11).

It is evident that during these few decades “a large gap [has] developed between the practising arts community and the administrators of the limited funds that [were] made available by the state” (Van Heerden 2008: 23). It has left the TYP industry in a dire state, in relation to what could be achieved when proper support structures and processes were in place, such as the case with the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals.

### **5.3 CURRENT TRENDS AND PRACTICES OF TYP IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The current state of the trends and practices of the TYP industry in the Western Cape clearly lacks the presence of a festival model that remotely resembles the model in the previous chapter. It highlighted the important role that government, organisers, and practitioners play to produce a successful experience for young people – the most essential elements being the position of the audience as both producer and consumer of their cultural experience, and the intensive dialogue established between stakeholders to achieve this dynamism. The philosophy of giving the youth an opportunity to voice their opinions and values within a safe environment, runs throughout all forms of TYP practices.

A positive rendering that did develop within the performing arts industry during the major transformation South Africa had undergone, was the emergence of an arts festival circuit. In the Western Cape there are “more than sixty-five culture-related events that take place every year ... [including] events and festivals in cuisine, dance, design, fashion, gay themes, literature, music and musical theatre, as well as multi-disciplinary festivals that include a range of these themes, theatre and visual arts” (Van Graan 2005: 33). Within this array of festival forms there are a few that incorporate youth initiatives into their festival programming, such as the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees<sup>22</sup>, Woordfees<sup>23</sup> and Suidoosterfees<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, there are festivals such as the Montagu Youth Arts Festival, Klein Libertas Tienertoneelfees and the ATKV Tienertoneelfees<sup>25</sup> which are in-school theatre competitions open to all schools and are, unfortunately, principally about prestige and competition, which does not completely resonate with youth arts methodologies discussed in the previous chapter. The BUYA Schools Theatre Festival hosted annually in Stellenbosch at the H.B. Thom Theatre is also an example where prestige and competition feature on the festival’s agenda.

Performances at the BUYA festival differ slightly from the above-mentioned competitions, as they also include primary schools and youth theatre groups to take part in the competition. A significant constraint of this festival is the fact that the dialogue is predominantly in isiXhosa which limits understanding of and identification with the performances. The festival remains a great opportunity for talented youths to develop their skills under professional guidance and showcase these skills on a professional stage, but the festival is still a far cry from the boutique festival model of the previous chapter. The Khayamandi Arts & Cultural Festival is a very young festival, also hosted annually in Stellenbosch, and is in danger of following in the footsteps of the festivals mentioned previously. The notion of competition governs the agenda of these festivals – certainly not the way to create *communitas* amongst young participants. These festivals create

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<sup>22</sup> The Little Karoo National Arts Festival is held annually in Oudtshoorn.

<sup>23</sup> Word Festival is held annually in Stellenbosch.

<sup>24</sup> South Easter Festival held annually in Cape Town.

<sup>25</sup> ATKV is the abbreviation for Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (Society for Afrikaans Language and Culture). The Western Cape leg of the festival is held annually at Durbanville High School.

individual group identities rather than uniting the youth as one group – a group that acknowledges and understands the homogeneity of their culture and creates a *communitas* despite their differences.

Another good example of an institution that has taken up the responsibility to create a platform for young people to participate in the arts, is the Artscape Theatre. They boast an *Education, Skills Development and Youth Programme* which runs throughout the year. The most significant events are the *Schools' Arts Festival* and the *High School Drama Festival*. The latter is theme-orientated and runs along the same lines as the aforementioned theatre competitions. The former, on the other hand, “gives learners the opportunity to showcase their talent for performing arts ... in the form of music, verse or dance” (Artscape 2012: 23). This is a very essential development, but has its shortcomings as well. It is also a programme that is predominantly run by the participating schools’ and the Artscape institutions agenda. The most significant problems is the fact that each item is only allowed to be 8 minutes long and drama is not allowed to participate in this event (Artscape 2012: 66). Once again revealing that the South African TYP industry is rather different from what was explored in the previous chapter.

The trends and practices that have emerged within these systems, shaped by the socio-political shift that occurred, will be examined in relation to the devised model of the study, and be compared to the boutique festival model. Areas of development will be identified through a SWOT analysis.

The Western Cape government does, however, host an annual festival for young people. In 1999 the government launched the Youth Environmental School (YES) Programme in partnership with the City of Cape Town, Stellenbosch Municipality and Spier Estate (Zille 2007 Online). The first programme was hosted as part of the Cape Metropolitan Festival of the Environment, but has grown into a year-round programme, and is supported by the Department of Education and the National Department of Environmental Affairs. Since 2008 the programme has been hosting an annual drama festival, open only to the schools participating in the programme, in a professional theatre

complex. The theme of the festival is always environmentally orientated and encourages the young participants to “demonstrate active citizenship – showing how they would approach a challenge and find a solution; how to be active role-players, change their behaviour and engage in effective long-term actions” (City of Cape Town 2013 Online).

The festival offers the young participants the space to voice their opinions on a professional stage and develop their artistic skills. Furthermore the festival succeeds in creating a sense of *communitas* amongst its young participants who stand together and advocate a noble cause. This festival is the closest example to the boutique festival model of the previous chapter, as it actually is a festival for young people by young people. Yet it still resides within the more educational region of TYP and not purely entertaining, which is what this paper seeks to investigate.

Apart from these rather sparse renderings of TYP within the festival circuit, there are also more conventional forms of TYP in South Africa, such as Theatre in Education (TIE) and Drama in Education (DIE). Yet, South African TYP organisations, companies and practitioners are undoubtedly being restricted by the lack of focus and waning funding systems within government structures. This forces TYP in South Africa to be very didactic in nature most of the times, which is not an utilisation of TYP’s true potential. The investigation to follow will reveal why I so boldly state that the TYP trends and practices are didactic. The didactic nature of TYP is mainly the result of the manner in which funding policies are structured in South Africa. Practitioners are in a sense forced to be overtly didactic in order to receive funding, as the government’s focus is on social development and education. It clearly reveals the lack of understanding of people in power about youth arts theories and the true potential and nature of TYP. A brief investigation into the concepts that make up most of the TYP industry in South Africa determines areas that need to be developed; what limitations there are within these areas; and what challenges need to be overcome. These more pedagogic forms still remain very crucial for developing and expanding the TYP industry in South Africa.

### 5.3.1 The TYP Industry in South Africa

Different TYP methodologies produce different TYP forms, yet a significant synergy can be found amongst the various philosophies of youth arts theory. Essentially the arguments amongst TYP practitioners and theorists boil down to education vs. entertainment and whether theatre for young people should be process or product orientated. This has given rise to a multitude of TYP forms and practices, yet most agree that a symbiosis needs to be maintained between the educational value and aesthetic experience and that the forms and practices should always be of outstanding quality. TYP practitioners are significantly challenged by the limits created by government policies and funding structures, which consequently inhibit the development and expansion of the TYP industry. Yet, this should not halt the production of quality TYP experiences as could be seen with what the Programming Unit was able to accomplish with a tight budget.

The counter argument from producers of DIE and TIE is that the experiences they give young people are entertaining, but it is clear that the locus of power of these performances resides with the educational function and framework (Pretorius 2008). Owing to this dominating didactic nature, it can be argued that it will not be considered as a choice of entertainment for young people, as was the case with the Stage X festival (Pretorius 2008: 10-11). There is a clear resonance in the processes utilised to create these quality experiences for young people, but the government in South Africa mainly seeks to exploit the TYP process as a pedagogical tool and does not embrace its full potential. Investigating what prominent researchers have to say about the manner in which TYP should be created, clearly reveals how ignorant our government is to the true value of TYP that is both educational and entertaining.

Schonmann argues that TYP is “a unique art form, with its own set of rules and conceptions [and] should be constantly cultivated” (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199). Thus the people in power should be constantly re-evaluating the state of the TYP industry, as well as the shifts in the needs and desires of the youth culture. He furthermore claims that TYP is not merely a hybridisation of theatre and education, “but

rather a complex and indivisible entity” (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199). Fact does, however, remain that “[e]ducation is not an external shell of an artistic core, nor should the art of theatre become in any way purely instrumental” (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199). Currently there seems to be a disturbing lack of balance between these extremes in many, if not all, TYP practices in South Africa. This is mostly because of funding structures forcing practitioners to be explicitly didactic. What should be realised, is that to create TYP that will be meaningful to young people is not related to questions about the event’s “content (the educational aspect) and its form (the theatrical aspect) but, rather, (...) to the connection between the form and meaning” (Schonmann in Schneider & Mack 2007: 199).

Agashe develops this notion even further and highlights the aspect of entertainment which is always aimed for in any theatrical event. It is clear that quality performances are entertaining, but also satisfy the audience’s “deepest psychological and social needs” (Agashe in Schneider 1997: 23). Considering the basis of youth arts theory that sees young people as viable cultural contributors, it is obvious that the various TYP forms should be united under one theatrical form. Graham believes this form should have five aims: “entertainment, psychological growth, educational exposure, aesthetic appreciation and the development of future audiences” (Graham quoted in Goldberg 1974: 14). The examples and the notions of youth arts theory discussed in the previous chapter reveals that young participants should be able to claim ownership of the events being produced and “to share in the creation of the end product” (Wood 2005: 70). Giroux and Epstein very eloquently and concisely capture these notions by stating that:

young people need to be given the opportunity to narrate themselves, to speak from the actual places where their experiences are shaped and mediated. This suggests more than letting kids have the opportunity to voice their concerns, it means providing the conditions – institutional, economic, spiritual, and cultural – that allow them to reconceptualise themselves as citizens and develop a sense of what it means to fight for important social and political issues that affect their lives, bodies, and society (Giroux in Epstein 1998: 48).

These arguments all clearly reveal a balance between entertainment and education, as well as positioning young people as viable cultural contributors. Unfortunately the South African government seems to be oblivious of the theories and practices of youth arts and the potential of TYP, or they find it of no importance. Despite this ignorant behaviour there are a few organisations and events, which are shimmering lights of hope, creating TYP to be consumed and enjoyed by audiences. These TYP forms are mostly found within the festival circuit and will be investigated below.

### **5.3.2 TYP as it appears within the festival circuit**

The organisers of festivals and the artists producing performances for festivals are also significantly challenged by the weakness in funding grants and policy documents. There are two festival streams I would like to examine in which young people are able to participate. The first being the youth theatre competitions and the second being the mainstream form of major arts festivals.

Across the province many schools produce theatrical performances; some are staged in the school hall, and others are written and produced to be staged at various theatre competitions, such as the festivals in Montagu and Durbanville or the nationwide ATKV Tienertoneel competition. There is much criticism about the function of theatre in schools, as this form can fall short when a director, or teacher, lacks the knowledge of and experience in working with young people and evidently employs poor working methods. Yet, should these shortcomings be addressed and developed, a school play “can [be] a source of much enjoyment to all its participants (Wood 2005: 101). According to Wood “[t]he school play forms a valuable and stimulating community activity, and the performance gives pleasure to audiences and performers alike”; and it is suggested that “the play [can] be of real value” if it refers to the school curriculum (Wood 2005:102).

Personally I have been involved in school productions like these, mostly as performer when I was at school, and as an audience member during my research. In 2013 I was a drama leader for a local high school in Stellenbosch and had first-hand experience of the positive impact drama process work has on young people. This form of TYP provides an

opportunity for the industry to develop, and it exposes young people to professional theatre-making. The winning production of the ATKV Tienertoneel competition is given the opportunity to compete with other plays at national level during the Aardklop Arts Festival in Potchefstroom. Incorporating TYP into a festival's programming definitely is a positive attribute, but the issue with these types of festivals still remains the dominating features of prestige and competition. This was an aspect I convinced my young drama group to ignore, as we never went to compete at a competition; the aim was to create theatre for the sake of theatre and the growth that comes with being involved in the process.

The other more satisfying and appealing aspect is that TYP productions and initiatives are funded and supported by major arts festivals. The Woordfees in Stellenbosch and Little Karoo National Arts Festival in Oudtshoorn are two fine examples of how TYP is being integrated into the festival structure.

The Woordfees boasts two distinct festival initiatives in their programming for the 2013 festival (Woordfees 2013). The one is aimed at children and infants (exact ages are not given). The other is the WOW (Words Open Worlds Fest) festival which is aimed at introducing young people between the ages of 9 and 18 to the world of creative industries. I will be focusing specifically on the events organised for the 13 – 18 year-olds. The entire project is divided into five segments and primarily focuses on giving the young participants an educational rather than the entertaining experience. Furthermore, focusing on the Afrikaans language as a medium for this, is the main focus of the festival.

The first initiative is a '*Skrywersfees*' (Writers' festival) which comprises various events where writers engage with young people by reading and discussing books with them. The second segment is '*Spesiaal vir ons Junior Leerder*' (Specially for our Junior Learner) which consists of arts and crafts workshops. The third is '*Spesiaal vir ons Senior Leerders*' (Specially for our Senior Learners), which I will investigate thoroughly and comprises a debating competition, a writers' course, a newspaper project and, finally, an entire day aimed at young people in their final year at school. The fourth segment is '*Spesiaal vir ons Onderwysers*' (Specially for our educators) which consists of a



discussion with writers and their youth books for those between the ages of 13 and 18. It also has a day-long forum event aimed at educators. Finally there is a segment, '*Spesiaal vir ons Gemeenskap*' (Specially for our Community), which consists of an evening of dancing and a carnival to end the festival. I would like to focus on the events aimed at the senior learners, teachers and community, as these are the most applicable to my research (Woordfees Programme 2013: 76 – 78).

The initiatives for the senior learners are definitely a necessity within our society, especially amongst underprivileged young people. Before investigating the event, it must be noted that most attendees at these events are not necessarily there by choice but because their schools oblige them to go, and that most of these attendees wear their school uniforms, because they are representing their schools and not themselves. This, as a matter of fact, considerably undermines the young participants' individuality, and already reveals the organisers' lack of understanding of youth arts theories.

The first to be discussed, is the debating competition. This is an excellent way to bring together young people from varying backgrounds. It furthermore promotes thought-through communication about socio-political and cultural issues, and could deepen their understanding of different opinions amongst their peers. The debates also act as a prominent platform for the young participants to voice their opinions, and could instil a sense of pride and ownership within them. These are all aspects that adhere to the youth arts theory, but the predominantly didactic approach of this medium is disconcerting. This is also the case as with the writers' course where a single writer hands down his/her knowledge about writing fiction. The newspaper project sustains the same problem as the previous two examples, viz. that of being predominantly didactic. Only 150 learners and their teachers are taught how to make their school's newspaper more interesting. The event also informs its young participants about entrepreneurial and bursary possibilities.

Finally, there is the '*WOW-dag vir Graad 12's*' (WOW Day for Gr. 12's), an event specifically targeting young people in their final year at school and hosted on the last day of the festival. There are three aspects to this event. Firstly, various discussions are held with the young participants. One such is a discussion about their future plans by people in

the media as well as students who motivate them to “follow their dream at Stellenbosch University”<sup>26</sup> and who tell them more about campus life (Woordfees 2013: 77). The other is a meeting with the Managing Director of the ATKV, Japie Gouws, and Artistic Director of the Woordfees, Prof. Dorothea van Zyl who tell them more about the festival and its projects involving the youth in – a rather mundane and self-absorbing exercise in my opinion. The second perturbing aspect of this event is an Afrikaans-specialist from the Western Cape Education Department discussing and giving hints to the young people about one of their papers for their final examination at the end of the year. The final aspect is a performance by the Wellington brass band that acts as an overture to the WOW Carnival event at the end of the festival.

These are all valid initiatives with a positive impact on the young participants, but they clearly all fall short of the processes and structures in place in the Stage X festival. The obvious focus is on the pedagogical aspects of these discussions and meetings, and nowhere is there any mention of entertaining these young people with performances that will appeal to their needs and desires. There is also no indication that the audience takes ownership of these events. A clear hierarchical programming structure is at work here, with the Artistic Director and her team deciding what would be best for these young people – indeed a far cry from what youth arts methodologies encourage. Furthermore, as regards the playing culture of these events, there is a strong focus on the written culture which is not in accordance with what Sauter (2004) says the playing culture should be. Obviously these events do have a positive outcome, but is the true potential of TYP is not being realised by the festival organisers. The viability of young people as cultural contributors is greatly being undermined.

I would like to briefly discuss the second and third features of the WOW fest. The first being events aimed specifically at teachers. Both the events are, once again, a discussion where the teachers are mostly passive. The only event that places the teachers in any significant role, is a forum discussion where 150 teachers and 30 final-year university students reflect on the role of technology in acquiring learning within a predominantly

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<sup>26</sup> Own translation.

passive milieu; here teachers are allowed to pose questions to a panel (Woordfees 2013: 78). Once again the true potential of allowing participants to engage in a relevant and impacting discussion is not being utilised. Finally, the entire WOW fest ends in a carnival where there are rides, food stalls and live music – all aimed at the wider community and not at the young participants in particular. It is a bazaar-like event focusing mainly on allowing its participants to socialise and be entertained by local artists.

The main concern with this annual event is the fact that it never resonates with the thematic focus of the festival and feels much like an add-on rather than being engulfed by the overall theme or spirit of the festival. In 2012 the overall theme was '*Groen*' (Green) which focused on general associations and connotations with the word in the Afrikaans-language. In 2013 it was '*Hemels*' (Heavenly) and again there were the same generalisations around the theme. According to the Artistic Director these themes are so broad so as to encompass a diversified selection of events, which is a valid argument within our multi-cultural society; yet is not what a successful theatrical event or festival is built on according to the theories of the IFTR group.

In 2013 festival, the most attended Afrikaans festival in South Africa, had been running for fourteen consecutive years (Woordfees 2013). There are many factors that could contribute to its success, but they are not related to the scope of this research which mainly focuses on the TYP events. Unfortunately, after investigating the events aimed at young people within the Woordfees programme, there's little, if any, resemblance to be found to the Stage X model discussed in the previous chapter. Thankfully they do provide platforms for young people's participation – which is a definite necessity – but these events focus mainly on a pedagogic experience and not on entertaining the young people involved.

It should be noted that there is a division between events for young people who are still in high school and those for young people who have already finished school. The latter are specifically catered for by the Woordfees in the '*Studentefees*' (Student fest) segment. This division clearly reflects the organisers' frame of mind, which is unlike that of the Programming Unit of the Stage X festival. This part of the festival programme comprises

a quiz competition, a body-panting competition, a djembe drum workshop and a musical event where various local artists perform. Personal experience has taught that the latter is significantly better attended than all the other events. Furthermore, it is clear that the young adults at whom these events are aimed, are considered to be part of the rest of the audience demographics that should attend theatre performances and discussions. Yet, once again, experience has taught that attendance at the live music events is significantly larger than at the theatre performances. What this reveals to this researcher and festival participant, is that the social aspect of festivalisation is considerably more important to young adults.

As far as young artists being able to present their work at the festival, there is considerable support. But, as I am also personally involved in these circles, I have regularly heard from acquaintances in the theatre industry that the festival fails to pay young artists on time. This should not happen and undoubtedly creates a breach of trust between organisers and stakeholders, which again results in bad relations – certainly not a desirable feature of a successful and sustainable festival.

The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), on the other hand, does allow young people to engage with theatrical forms in various ways. Through attending this festival for a number of years, and investigating the environment and festival experience, I was able to compare the structures and processes to those of the boutique festival model in the previous chapter. From the start it should be clear that the KKNK is a major arts festival, specifically aimed at Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. Yet, it does boast an extensive programme for young participants and festival goers. I was also involved in the Prikkel Fokusgroep (Stimulus Focus Group), an initiative aimed at researching the needs, desires and practices of young adults who attend the festival. The ways in which young people can engage with the festival, will be investigated and discussed.

The KKNK does offer a fairly extensive programme for young children every year. The programme contains various performances aimed at infants and young children. There is

also a specially designated space, called the ‘*Kowee Kinderhoekie*’<sup>27</sup>, where parents can leave their children in the care of professional carers. Thus the festival does engage its young audience – a prominent feature in a major arts festival model. As this age group does not fall in the scope of this study, I wish to focus on the performances, initiatives and spaces designated for teenagers and young adults. The KKNK Programme Guidelines document reveals that the festival organisers are interested in producing theatre productions for young people. The festival divides “young people” into two segments: Firstly, young adults between the ages 19 and 29; the festival regards it as a priority to enlarge this audience segment by means of theatre offerings that communicate with this target group, as well as more experimental presentations, cabaret, open-air productions, open-air music shows and musical concerts” (ABSA KKNK 2014: 2).

The other group comprises school-going youths between the ages 15 and 19. Here the festival supports the creation of “theatre and musical productions that will speak to the schools’ target market without being stereotyped as or spoken down to as ‘teenage’ theatre productions” (ABSA KKNK 2014: 2). Clearly the festival organisers are interested in attracting and developing a younger audience and they do this on various platforms and venues throughout the festival. The most prominent examples will be investigated and discussed.

A very prominent performance in this regard was *2 – 21*, one of the flagship productions of 2009. The play was directly aimed at young people and boasted the collaboration of two prominent musicians from the band, *Fokofpolisiekar*. As from 2004 the band had gained cult status amongst young people and the involvement of two members was a great selling point to attract young people. The play was labelled a ‘musical garage spectacle’ and featured a half-pipe and stage where live electronic/rock music was produced in an attempt to do away with traditional structures of theatre and popular music. The postmodern thematic approach revolved around the concept of the ‘scapegoat’ weaved into popular themes, and investigated different ways to portray the dialogue, monologues and lyrics; the aria; and of images in a landscape of sound – a

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<sup>27</sup> Kowee Children’s Corner. Kowee is also a television channel aimed at children younger than 12 years.

landscape in which we found the deconstruction of man (2 – 21 Jaco se Director's Notes, 2009).

The format of the performance was very successful in attracting young people, but my personal opinion is that the content was way beyond the grasp of the young audience members. The mixture of popular culture and theatre could have very possibly resonated with the youth culture of the time and arguably change some of the more conservative participants' perceptions of what theatre could be. The format of the performance is an excellent example of what can be achieved and is something TYP practitioners need to strive towards. Unfortunately the content was produced without consulting the young audiences, which is not in accordance with the processes investigated in the previous chapter. Yet the creation of more cutting-edge and out-of-the-box type of productions clearly resonates with young people in contemporary society, and is the type of performances that need to be implemented into a youth festival alongside more traditional performances.

In the past three years there have been prominent shifts and changes within the KKNK programme for young audiences, from teenagers to young adults. The initiatives most relevant to this study are the specially commissioned performances, produced with young people directly involved. In 2013, however, the festival also designated a specific space aimed at catering for the needs of teenagers – a crucial aspect in attracting young people to the festival. An article published in the *Krit*<sup>28</sup> newspaper on 9 April 2011 stated that the teenage participants of the festival are in need of a space where they can meet and socialise on their own terms (Schoeman 2011: 6). Two years later the festival created this space – the Johnny Biskit's Slounge. This space and other more established initiatives are investigated below.

The commissioned performances allow young talented teenagers from across the Western Cape Province to be involved in a professional production process. Every year there is only one such a production, clearly limiting the number of teenagers exposed to the

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<sup>28</sup> The newspaper is only distributed during the festival and contains various reviews and articles about the festival, as well as a festival map and programme.

process of a theatrical performance. The process of producing these performances works exactly like that of a professional production. There is an audition process where the director/producer sees hundreds of young talented teenagers and chooses the best of the best. In 2011 the Wordsmith's Theatre Factory produced a teenage cabaret, *Gly*, where 8 actors and 10 dancers were given the opportunity to work with professional theatre makers. In 2012 the production company TEATERteater produced *Bos* where young actors had the opportunity to work alongside a professional actor, Stian Bam, and with director, Marthinus Basson. Originally produced for the Suidoosterfees, the young talent for this performance was chosen through the TV Plus Acting Competition and not the standard audition process. Every year these types of productions are produced at different major arts festivals by various practitioners who are either involved in the competitions and its associated initiatives or who are chosen to produce the specially commissioned works for young people.

These productions are very valid initiatives, yet remain engulfed within a major arts festival model, which is a far cry from the boutique model. In 2013 the festival organisers decided to follow a different approach and actually provided a specified space for young people under the age of 18 to take ownership of a part of the festival in the form of the Johnny Biskit's Slounge. A discussion of the various dimensions of the Johnny Biskit's Slounge, viz. the space and performances, now follows.

Firstly, the placement of the Johnny Biskit's Slounge was away from the rest of the festival grounds. This immediately isolated the young people and, in my opinion, excluded them as viably cultural contributors. By locating the space specifically designated for teenagers away from the main festival space, can arguably create sense of exclusion from the main festival amongst the young people.

The space itself was divided into various sections. The outside area had a covered lounge area and stage where various musicians performed between theatrical performances. The building in which performances were held, was also divided into two sections. The entrance had a bar, which sold non-alcoholic refreshments, a gaming area and a photo booth. In the evenings the entire setup changed. The space between the stage and

entrance was combined and turned into a nightclub where teenagers could spend their nights dancing away and socialising with their friends. When I attended the festival as a teenager, a space where I could socialise with my friends and enjoy entertainment that appealed to us, was a great need and I believe it to still the case today. The Johnny Biskit's Slounge is a significant step in the right direction at organisational level, yet there is still a lot of room for further development and improvement. Seeing that 2013 was only the first year that this space was provided for the teenage participants of the festival, only time can tell whether it will be a successful endeavour.

Four performances were staged at the Johnny Biskit's Slounge every day, one of which was *Poppekas*<sup>29</sup> with an age restriction of 16. The performance premiered at the Vryfees in 2012 and had a successful run at the KKNK as well. This production, along with the other two productions, *Die Monster in die Gang*<sup>30</sup> and *Droom*<sup>31</sup>, featured only professional actors. The content of *Poppekas* was the most contentious and dealt with sensitive topics of life, such as initiation and rape, in men's residences at universities. The content of this performance might not have fully resonated with teenagers, but was definitely a hot topic on the tongues of young adults studying at tertiary institutions. *Die Monster in die Gang* was a comic drama that dealt with issues around a father dying from MS, and his daughter and random people entering their lives. The performance dealt with sensitive topics in a comic manner which could arguably be meaningful to young people.

*Droom* was a musical spectacle based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and purely meant for entertainment. The other performance, *Checkityt@Route62*, produced by the Wordsmith's Theatre Factory, was commissioned by the festival and differed from the other three productions. This performance took on an entirely different approach and allowed individual talent to shine. Young talented singers, dances, rappers and musicians from around the Western Cape were given the opportunity to perform on a professional stage under the guidance of a professional production team. The *Checkityt@Route62* show utilised a workshop-orientated process and allowed the young

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<sup>29</sup> Literally translated into 'dolls closet'.

<sup>30</sup> The Monster in the Passage.

<sup>31</sup> Dream.



participants to explore their creative abilities. It thus tends to lean more towards the community arts model than a form of entertainment.

Clearly there are some development and progression within the festival programme which reveal the KKNK organisers' interest in young people attending the festival. Fact remains, however, that the manner in which the young participants are approached, does not employ many youth arts theory methodologies. With adults deciding what the needs are for young people and how it should be catered for, a clear hierarchical structure is still noticeable.

The KKNK has two initiatives that allow young practitioners the opportunity to perform. They are *Baanbreek* and *Deurbraak*, each having a unique agenda. The *Baanbreek* project is aimed at providing more alternative practitioners the opportunity to perform their work. The venue offers established artists the opportunity to showcase “non-verbal, physical theatre, English presentations, as well as experimental Afrikaans theatre productions” (ABSA KKNK 2014: 6). Despite the fact that the KKNK is a predominantly Afrikaans festival, the project does not focus on the specific language of a performance, but on performances which “transcend the limitations of language” (ABSA KKNK 2014: 6).

The *Deurbraak* project, on the other hand, provides new and up-and-coming theatre practitioners with a platform to perform their work. The festival aims to assist artists on the verge of making a breakthrough and that, according to the festival organisers deserves to be presented to the festival audience (ABSA KKNK 2014: 6). These artists need to apply for funding just like any other production company – more than often a daunting procedure with no real guarantee for receiving any funding.

The most disputed event at the KKNK is the *Kaktus op die Vlakte*<sup>32</sup> musical festival. The event has been part of the festival since the very beginning. At first the event hosted prominent Afrikaans musicians from all colours and creeds, but evolved into a full-blown

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<sup>32</sup> Cactus on the Plains.

rock festival in later years. The history of this event eloquently captures the evolution of the Afrikaans music industry in South Africa and the rise of more alternative bands, such as Kobus! and Fokofpolisiekar. In 2006 the event boasted three stages, but due to numerous undisclosed reasons the festival decided to cancel the event for 5 years. One can speculate that it had a lot to do with way Fokofpolisiekar influenced the young generation and the fact that underage drinking had flourished during the run of the event<sup>33</sup>.

In 2012 the event was reinstated into the festival programme with a zero-tolerance stance on underage drinking. I was there to attend the event and eager to see what the festival had changed. This time around the festival organisers were prepared for the event: it was hosted way from the main festival; it boasted the biggest names in the alternative Afrikaans music industry; there were different armbands for under 18's and young adults; an enormous stage with screens and magnificent sound and lighting were set up; and a shuttle service transported participants back to the main festival grounds.

This event is one of the main attractions for teenagers and young adults at the festival, and a valuable contributor to creating a relationship between the festival and its young participants. It is hard to cater for the 15 – 29 year-old demographic group, especially when alcohol is available. Clearly the festival organisers learnt that the event does come with certain challenges and they found ways to overcome these challenges. The success of this event cannot be denied and festival organisers will always have to balance the needs of the young people and those of adult participants. Inevitably, the young people are the future participants of the festival and building a good relationship with them, can lead to their dedicated and loyal attendance of the festival as adults.

The KKNK also includes a community arts festival programme that thoroughly engages with less fortunate citizens of Oudtshoorn and young people in the Western Cape. The initiatives aimed at young people, come in various forms: many workshops are offered in

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<sup>33</sup> For deeper understanding of the movement initiated by Fokofpolisiekar, refer to Annie Klopper's thesis *Die Opkoms van Afrikaanse Rock en die Literêre Status van Lirieke, met Spesifieke verwysing na Fokofpolisiekar* (2009), as well as her book *Biografie van 'n Bende: Die Storie van Fokofpolisiekar* (2011).

different artistic disciplines; an acting competition; and an audience development programme. The festival's workshops for young people cover various artistic disciplines such as photography, drama (stagecraft, improvisation, storytelling, and character development), music, and fiction writing (ABSA KKNK 2012: 5 – 14). Most of these initiatives are aimed specifically at young people residing in Oudtshoorn, but there are programmes that include other neighbouring towns. This study will focus on the more theatre-orientated initiatives. Various companies that are interested in the arts and children living on the streets in Oudtshoorn, also offer workshops and the products of these workshops are integrated into the festival parade. The festival parade also offers local artists the opportunity to participate in workshops to develop their skills and, at the same time, actually participate in the festival. The nature and form of many of the workshops change from year to year, but there never is a lack of projects that aim to engage with and empower the community.

The acting competition held annually gives drama groups from the Eden district the opportunity to take part in a competition. Finalists are chosen from every town and they take part in various workshops during the run-up to the finals (ABSA KKNK 2013: 83). The winning production has the opportunity to perform at the KKNK, the Zabalaza Festival and the Suidoosterfees. A great opportunity for young artists, but this aspect of the festival coincides with the same principles and values of the in-school theatre competitions discussed earlier.

The final projects I would like to discuss, are the audience development programmes that the festival maintains. There are two projects: firstly, the Klap! (Slap!) initiative aimed at high schools in the Western Cape, and, secondly the Prikkel initiative for young adults. During the 2011 KKNK festival I conducted informal interviews with the young participants of the Klap! project and the performers of *Gly* – with some interesting results. I also had the opportunity to take part in the Prikkel focus group during the 2012 festival.

Both these projects run along the same premises and offer young people the opportunity to attend various productions. The only difference is that the Klap! programme also offers

participants the opportunity to take part in workshops. The projects expose its young participants to a great variety of performance genres. Klap! ranges from straightforward entertainment to very sophisticated forms of performance, and participants can experience the arts as drama, visual arts, music, dance and the spoken word. The Prikkel project, on the other hand, offers university students discount on specific performances – a clear implication that the festival organisers determine which performances are applicable to the young participants. This can be somewhat problematic if thorough research has not been done on what performances would appeal to young people. The festival runs the risk that the target audience might feel that they have gained no ownership of their festival experience. Yet, with the Prikkel focus group of 2012, I believe that the festival organisers gained sufficient insight into and understanding of what productions appeal to and would attract young audiences. I will now discuss this initiative as well as the findings of my 2011 informal interviews.

The Prikkel focus group allowed young adults the opportunity to select performances they would like to attend for free. The only requirement was that the participants communicate their experiences on the Prikkel focus group Facebook page and write a short essay about their experience after the festival. This is a great way to build an open and trustworthy relationship with young audience members. The implementation of social media also allowed for immediate feedback about performances and for correspondence between participants that do not know each other about their experiences. The utilisation of social media came up in all the informal interviews I had with young people during the festival. Social media is a vital tool to utilise to engage with young people on their terms and in a space where they feel they are in control. The Arena Theatre Company in Australia, for instance, utilised the internet to allow young people to give feedback on their show *Outlooker* during the generative phases.

In the play an Outlooker is an Australian animal that children can collect .... [A participant] can type in his ideas for an Outlooker and send in a drawing of what it might look like. He can listen to some of the music from the show and let the company know whether he likes it or not. He can even read a scene from

*Outlookers* and give his views on the story, the characters and the theme of friendship (Mack in Schneider & Mack 2007: 86).

The notion of young people being engaged in the creative processes of a performance coincides with the consultation processes used by the Programming Unit, discussed in the previous chapter. By utilising the internet, one can ensure even more the participation of even more young people. Using the process discussed above, allows young people to know more about the production and to feel part of the creative processes which will give them a keener sense of ownership. Thus the organisers of the KKNK are taking a step in the right direction by creating social media platforms for young people to engage with one another and express their views and experiences of the performances and the overall festival. Social media allow for immediate and continuous communication and feedback from participants, and are becoming a crucial aspect to festival organisation and market research.

Other feedback that arose from my informal interviews with the participants of Klap!, was the definite need for socialising with friends and being able to dance and enjoy themselves. It was also clear that, besides wanting to watch theatre performances, young people want to watch live music as well. The Johnny Biskit's Slounge is an answer to this need, but there is still room for improvement. The young people felt that they could relate to the more sophisticated forms of theatre, but that more background would have improved their understanding of the productions. Yet, on the other hand, they felt that productions should not preach to them. Once again the use of social media platforms could aid with this challenge. They also felt that the workshops they attended should somehow correlate with professional productions at the festival, as it would ground the experience even more. The final and most important aspect was that the performances should be of good quality – a very important aspect in youth arts theory; festival organisers cannot merely implement initiatives and performances without considering its quality. Organisers of major festivals who seek to engage young people into their festival programme, need to thoroughly research and implement their youth initiatives to ensure that the quality is outstanding according to its participants.

The constraint of the KKNK initiatives is the fact that only a select few young artists are exposed to professional theatre, as there are only a few examples of productions specifically aimed at young people. This does not fully resonate with youth arts theory and is not the way in which TYP can truly flourish. Fact, however, remains that it is decidedly challenging to incorporate youth theatre into an adult festival.

All of the forms found in the KKNK arts festivals are not without faults, as “[t]here is a strong sense of instability about [the festival] system” which is generating “criticism and pessimism about the quality of the work being produced and long-term prospects for theatre as a viable industry in the country” (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183). Hauptfleisch identifies two key problems that should be addressed.

The first problem that Hauptfleisch highlights, concerns the way in which “festival programmes are compiled, money [is] allocated, and the venues [are] assigned”, and pertains particularly to “artists (in this case, writers, directors, performers, and so on)” (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183). Hauptfleisch furthermore states that the “application process ... is often slow and the exact criteria for acceptance are unclear”, and that many suspect there is a “form of nepotism or bias at play amid organisers” (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183). This causes theatre companies to submit multiple applications in an attempt to ensure that one of their proposed productions will gain entry, and to regard application almost as a lottery (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183). Practitioners will just have started their creative processes when they find out whether they have received funds and how much (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183).

This is obviously not the way to make either true ‘art’ or a sustainable livelihood, since it does not really allow provision for long-term development of companies or of a substantial and serious body of work (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183).

The fact that government funding for the creative industry is continuing to diminish, and being mal-administered, is exacerbating the situation (Van Heerden 2008: 23 - 24). Clearly the challenges faced by TYP practitioners are much worse than those of the example companies of the previous chapter.

The second predicament creating an unfavourable environment for the theatre industry, is “the perception that festivals are huge – and immensely remunerative – bazaars or craft markets, and that they privilege commercial work, public partying, drinking, and free entertainment over the work of serious artists” (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183). It is an increasing concern for audiences and artists alike, as festivals have become a source of easily available income for many communities – “in some cases almost the only substantial source for the region” (Hauptfleisch 2006: 183). In the light of these very striking problems it seems almost impossible to compare the South African TYP industry with that of international standards. The reality is that it seems inappropriate to systematically compare and investigate the local trends and practices with either the boutique model or festival methodologies formulated and investigated formerly. I consider Hauptfleisch’s broad-spectrum diagram (Figure 5.1) to be much more suitable for discussing the disappointing environment of local festivals, as it draws greater attention to the actual frailty of the festivalisation process.



**Figure 5.1 The Multitude of Factors Impacting on an Event**

What this diagram proposes, is that the *raison d'être* and centre of attention (or rather thematic focus as discussed in the previous chapter) of festivalisation processes can be immensely problematic and complex, because if the different elements are unequally balanced, there is a strong possibility of disagreement and disunity (Hauptfleisch 2006: 196). On the other hand the probability of success is equally achievable “if the central focus (represented by the star) is maintained and served in such a way as to mobilise all the constituent elements in one event” (Hauptfleisch 2006: 196). In the light of this Hauptfleisch identifies three characteristics that fulfil essential functions within the structures and processes currently occurring in South Africa:

First, each festival is subject to all these forces, although they may not carry equal weight in the processes or have an equal impact on a particular festival. It is a fact that no festival can take place without (voluntary or forced) co-operation between all the above-mentioned forces and, as a result of this participation, each one of these forces has both rights and privileges in terms of the total event.

Second, the forces listed are all present, but they have a particular relationship to each other, and, depending on the nature of the particular festival, the weight they carry varies from festival to festival. It is in fact the weight carried by the individual forces and the power relationship between them in the festival that determine the core nature of that particular event.

Third, given its structure, every festival has, of necessity, multiple aims and expectations of which local expectations regarding publicity, tourism, job creation, the generation of income, and the cultural development of the local populace would normally have precedence. This means that no single festival can be a representation (or clone) of the abstract (metropolitan) cultural industry, for it is strongly rooted in its local identity (Hauptfleisch 2006: 196).

The South African environment is extremely challenging and, in order for the TYP industry to flourish, numerous changes and developments need to be effected by people



with authority as regards policies, funding and producing a youth festival. After evaluating the current trends and practices, it is evident that the festival I wish to propose does not exist in its full form. In comparison with international trends and practices, South Africa's TYP industry is very weak and in dire need of development. According to Pretorius (2008: 44) this has led to "stagnation of ideas and possibly of audiences' perception of what is theatre". I fully agree with Pretorius when he suggests that a symbiosis is needed between the educational and entertainment qualities of TYP. Theatre in Education (TIE) and Drama in Education (DIE) still seem to dominate the theatre industry in South Africa, which is in stark contrast with international trends and practices. The positive impacts that an industry – one which balances the educational and entertainment values – can have on its young audiences are invaluable to the future development of audiences.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

There are noticeable differences between what is happening on the international level of TYP and the practices in South Africa. The South African TYP industry is in dire need to make people in power understand, as Richer states, to create "work [that] is driven by a commitment to recognise and profile young people as artists in their own right, and to provide opportunities for their work to be profiled, and for young audiences to connect with this work" (Richer quoted in Seffrin 2006: 109). Symbiosis and collaboration between the various characteristics that can produce TYP, is of utter importance. In order to grow a flourishing and sustainable industry that creates theatrical events and festivals in accordance with youth culture, government and educational institutes need to modify their approaches significantly in conjunction with TYP practitioners in the country. In the same vein, TYP practitioners and organisers need to seriously re-evaluate the methods they are employing and find a way in which they can adapt these in order to develop the industry and let possible stakeholders realise its true potential.

The investigation has highlighted many positive aspects in the current situation, but it seems that they are outweighed by the challenges still facing TYP practitioners and

organisers. A summary of these strengths and weaknesses highlights the areas in need of significant attention and development.

There are many strengths and opportunities that the TYP industry in South Africa need to develop in order to ensure its sustainability. The numerous theatres that have the required human resources and infrastructure to produce relevant and appealing productions, need to be thoroughly utilised. The various platforms available at festivals that invest in new work and support youth audience development, need to be sustained and developed, for they provide an income for TYP practitioners and an opportunity for young people to experience theatre. This also reveals that there is already a potential audience for whom a youth festival can be organised. Innovative ways need to be found and established to receive funds from government, the private sector and the international community.

Owing to the challenging environment in which theatre practitioners need to create theatre, most of the productions are self-generated. This shows just how versatile theatre practitioners have become, for they do marketing, fund-raising, market research, etc. for their productions. The many DIE and TIE forms need to be sustained and developed. TYP practitioners also need to utilise this medium to develop their skills, generate income and expose young people to the world of theatre. TYP practitioners primarily need to establish a balance between the educational and entertainment aspects of the form; government might then just realise the true potential of TYP and adapt their policies in order to support the industry (Venter 2007: 96).

Government's lack of support and understanding definitely weakens the industry and creates a challenging environment for practitioners in which to create TYP. Funds might be available for productions and touring, but a lack of understanding of the TYP industry is evident. An absence of vision and no connection between policies and strategies to ensure the development and sustainability of TYP result in ill-applied funding. This is proven by the fact that currently most funding is only available on an *ad hoc* basis. Furthermore, the absence of skills and experienced competence to implement effective administrative mechanisms also needs to be addressed. Media coverage regarding TYP productions is depleted and adds to the low status it has in society. There is an absence of

national forums to conduct a debate about, specifically, TYP aesthetics and development. A national journal that documents development, reviews, etc. does not exist for TYP. Productions that do make it onto the festival circuit, are only available to those audiences, and only tour to other festivals and major cities if they are successful or can get sufficient funding to facilitate the expensive tours. Audiences in other parts of the country do not have an opportunity to experience them. By implementing a youth festival model that can work for different regions in South Africa, more young people will be exposed to and experience theatrical performances, and be part of organising a festival to ultimately benefit greatly from it socially, economically and culturally. Unfortunately, even though most training institutes offer training in the technical aspects of theatre, training in the administrative, marketing, touring, financing sections is sadly insufficient. These aspects are fundamental to producing successful productions and festivals (Venter 2007: 96 – 97).

Despite these daunting challenges, I still believe that, with proper management and organisation, a successful and sustainable youth festival can be produced in South Africa – a festival that is able to balance the much debated balance between the pedagogical and entertainment ideals of TYP. In the following chapter a way in which this can be achieved, will be proposed.

## CHAPTER 6

### A TYP FESTIVAL MODEL FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILIEU

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has revealed that the environment in which TYP in South Africa has to try and flourish is far from ideal. I firmly believe that, with the appropriate approach, practitioners, teachers, government and young people can help build and sustain a proper TYP industry in South Africa –one that balances the much debated dichotomy between education and entertainment. It is clear that the opportunities a youth festival can offer the TYP industry are immense and highly influential, and, by implementing a proper festival model, the TYP industry can develop further and hopefully reach its full potential.

The theoretical dimensions of the theatrical event and festivalisation developed by Sauter are approached more pragmatically and are utilised to facilitate the development of a festival model for South African TYP practitioners. The previous chapters revealed that the TYP industry in South Africa is in dire need of major development. It is rather difficult to create a concrete model that can immediately be implemented into the circumstances of the country. In order to develop a proper model, the following discussion will be twofold, as it will position an idealistic approach and a more realistic or feasible approach side by side to give an idea about what is required to create a successful and sustainable festival for young people in South Africa.

The devised festival model will stem mainly from the boutique festival model developed by Seffrin. It will be developed to be as generic as possible so that the model can be employed by TYP practitioners and organisers across the entire country. It has come to my attention that organisers and practitioners will have to be the people to take action first in order to get the ball rolling. A lot of the responsibilities to guide the young participants in their experience – be it through direct or indirect communication – and produce a successful festival, depend on the organisers' choices and actions.

Clearly the cultural context within which TYP in South Africa has to be created, has a major impact on the way in which an event will be executed. Firstly, the government's policy document (concerning public funding) is a major concern, as it is aimed at broader social development and not entertainment; practitioners will therefore have to alter their proposals in order to get funding from government. Private funding, on the other hand, or finding suitable and willing sponsors will allow practitioners to use a different approach to recruit funding for the event. One of the major issues will always be finding proper funding. With substantial funding the event will be more successful, since proper funding will enable artists and organisers to at least work without monetary restrictions and thus add production value.

The other issue is finding competent practitioners and organisers to execute an event that adheres to the boutique festival model. The involvement of educational institutions, such as teachers and their schools, as well as tertiary institutions, will also be crucial in producing an event aimed at young people. There are two major players in this model: the organisers (including other stakeholders such as teachers and TYP companies) and the participants. There indeed is a youth market seeking to be entertained through live entertainment, but it should be executed on their terms and what their needs and desires are, and not those of the organisers or, worse, government's terms.

Finally, by having these two structures (funding and competent professionals) in place, it will indeed be possible to effect a boutique festival model. In many major cities and towns, such as Stellenbosch, there are many schools and young people to involve in organising a festival that caters for their needs and fancies.

Due to the nature of Sauter's festival model, there are many areas where the Cultural Context, Contextual Theatricality, Playing Culture and Theatrical Playing dimensions overlap and impact on one another when employing them pragmatically. Furthermore, the boutique festival model, which positions the audience as producers of their own festival, also creates major overlaps within the various dimensions – especially the

Contextual Theatricality and Playing Culture dimensions. This part of the study will systematically work through the various areas that need to be considered when producing a festival for young people. It will consider the necessary features of the festival structure that need attention and development: “politics, management, performances and environment” (Sauter 2007: 215).

## **6.2. THE SOCIO-POLITICAL, ECONOMIC and CULTURAL CONTEXT of SOUTH AFRICA**

Previously it has been revealed that the cultural context within which South African TYP practitioners need to produce events or festivals, is vastly different from other countries in which this particular form is thriving. To use Van Maanen’s terminology, the third circle of context or cultural context concerns the political, economical, judicial, ideological and educational worlds which determine and generate the festival (Martin, Seffrin & Wissler in Cremona et al. 2004: 100). The most prominent setback for producing a festival, is the government’s lack of understanding of how TYP can and should actually function. Government has produced run-down policies which do not specifically support TYP, which would be the ideal. Owing to this, this research approaches the devising of the model from two perspectives: one is the realistic environment in which practitioners need to produce TYP; the other is where government policies and support are more in compliance with international standards where funding for TYP is specified within policy documents. In the light of Van Maanen’s frames, the modification of policy documents will impact on the other theatrical contexts as well – possibly in a positive manner. The way in which the TYP industry will be influenced, can at present only be speculated; accurate conclusions will only be made after experimentation in practice.

### **6.2.1 Government Policy and Public Funding**

The success of a festival will be more achievable when supported by government policies and public funds (Robertson & Frew 2008: 131). The examples used in the previous

chapters make it clear that one of the imperative elements of festivals and events, is public funding, “and it is a given that many events would not be staged without some form of government subsidy or support” (Carlsen in Yeoman et al. 2004: 252). Governments from around the world recognise that theatrical events or festivals have a positive impact on the society in which they are held. The same goes for South Africa, but it is clear that without decent and specified funding the full potential of TYP cannot be developed by practitioners and organisers. The environment is challenging, but all hope is not lost, as there are prominent funding structures in place for practitioners – they just need to know how.

There are four major public funding structures available for theatre practitioners in South Africa. The first is the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) – discussed in Chapter 5 – which is different from the other funding bodies, as any artist, practitioner or organisation can apply for funding. The chances of receiving a grant are, however, not a given, for the DAC needs to provide funding for all nine provinces and thus the funds become rather scant. Furthermore, funding support is only given on a project basis, thus long-term planning and investment are bordering on the impossible. Three other major funding bodies can also be approached: the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF); Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) and the Arts and Culture Trust (ACT) – all of which exclusively fund non-profit organisations. In order to be eligible for funding from these funding bodies, “the company must (to a large extent) subscribe to the national principles of nation building as prescribed by government” (Pretorius 2008: 55). Thus, in order to receive funding in the form of grants and/or sponsorships, artists, organisers and practitioners need to be rather imaginative in their approaches and innovatively package their artistic product (Cox 2008: 41). This highlights the primary concern or challenge for South African TYP practitioners and organisers – money. Yet, it is not a unique challenge, as TYP practitioners and organisers all over the world are constantly struggling for proper funding to create a product of high quality. South African practitioners should learn from the successes of others.

Despite the possibilities and capability of TYP as a creative and educational tool, “it is sadly difficult to source funding or sponsorship for arts and culture initiatives” (Cox

2008: 41). Chapter 5 disclosed that this is due to a lack of focus in government policies for the creation of TYP in South Africa. There is not much that organisers or practitioners can do about the fact that in South Africa TYP is not yet specified in government policies, but they can definitely find a way to produce entertaining high-quality events that are in line with government policy. In a more ideal world practitioners in South Africa would not have to persuade government for funding by demonstrating how educational their event will be, because, fact remains, that simply participating in TYP already is an educational exercise.

In relation to policy documents in other countries, such as Australia, this study maintains that national government needs to transform their policy regarding financial support for the performative arts. The primary modification government should effect, is to specify theatre within policy documents and to differentiate between mainstream theatre and TYP. Once this is done and a thorough relationship between government and TYP practitioners is established, the next step will be to create and practice a balance between the educational and entertainment aspects of TYP.

Practitioners, as a matter of course, have to explore other feasible funding structures – the most obvious being the private sector, which can also be exacting. A discussion of sourcing probable funding from this sector of society follows.

### **6.2.2 Private funding**

In modern society there has been an incredible rise of private funding for artistic events, including festivals, as there has been a transformation in sponsors' understanding of the marketing, public relations and other possibilities of festivals (Allen et al. 2002: 57). Sponsorship has become standard practice for the promotional campaigns of a festival alongside the more customary components, such as advertising and sales promotions, but still intends to achieve particular organisational objectives (Allen et al. 2002: 225). According to Crompton (1994), this is partly due to a number “of changes that have occurred in the business environment”. These changes include:

- Increases in the cost of television advertising.



- Loss in the effectiveness of television advertising due to the introduction of the remote control allowing viewers to change channels whenever an advertisement appears.
- Growth in the number of media outlets (including TV pay channels, radio stations and specialist magazines), making it difficult for promotional messages to ‘cut through the clutter’.
- Expansion in the number of pay TV channels (satellite and cable) and their subsequent need for programme material. This has provided many more opportunities for events, especially sporting events, to be televised, thus enhancing the potential exposure available to the sponsors.
- Growth in the commercialisation of sport, both amateur and professional, providing expanded opportunities for organisations to engage in sponsorship.
- Increases in the number of products/services on the market, accompanied by a drop in the number of companies (by merger and take-over) producing them. This has increased the need for producers to enhance their relationships with the retailers of their products/services through such means as entertainment and hospitality.

(Crompton quoted in Allen et al. 2002: 225 – 226)

Sponsorship can be defined in many ways, but there is a similarity in the dominant elements of these explanations. Collectively the definitions specify key areas of sponsorship:

First, it is a commercial transaction/investment and not a donation, a view some seekers of sponsorship sometimes take. Second, sponsorship may take the form of either a direct payment or the provision of in-kind services/products. Third, the return sought from sponsorship is one that will ultimately positively affect either the profitability of a business or, as is the case with public sector sponsors, provide some other benefit (Allen et al. 2002: 224).

Furthermore it should be emphasised that sponsorship entails a mutual relationship amongst the parties directly involved. Support from sponsorships in the private sector is

crucial for the prosperity of new and growing festivals. Festival and event organisers are generally actively busy in the processes of “identifying sponsors, preparing sponsorship proposals and servicing sponsors” (Allen et al. 2002: 224). Balancing the relationship between the parties and their often differing needs and desires, is essential for the success and sustainability of the festival. Evidently “[c]ommon agendas [should] be identified which support the sponsorship and deliver additional benefits to the event” (Allen et al. 2002: 58). It is thus vital that the festival organisers determine precisely what the needs and desires of sponsors are and exactly what the festival can give them, for sponsors may not be concerned about the number of people attending the festival, and “may [rather] be seeking mechanisms to drive sales, or want to strengthen client relationships through hosting activities” while the festival is taking place (Allen et al. 2002: 58). Organisers should be willing “to go beyond the formal sponsorship agreement, and to treat the sponsors as partners in the event”, for great ideas can be generated from forming such partnerships amongst stakeholders (Allen et al. 2002: 58).

Sponsorship for festivals, especially from the private sector, necessitates an exchange for their financial input. Usually funding from a company

derives from the marketing or corporate communications budgets, and companies require a range of benefits in return for such sponsorship, particularly benefits that raise their profile, market their goods to particular audiences and polish their image (Cox 2008: 42).

It is an important factor for organisers and practitioners to take into account when they request financial assistance from a business. Companies engage in sponsorship predominantly on an “assessment of the benefits they offer” (Allen et al. 2002: 226). Benefits differ from organisation to organisation and are also determined by the specific judicious aim at the time. Festival organisers, therefore, need to have a full understanding of the “suite of potential benefits associated with sponsorship so that they can customise their sponsorship offerings” (Allen et al. 2002: 226). From a corporate point of view a variety of writers<sup>34</sup> have endeavoured to establish what benefits can be achieved through sponsoring festival and events. These include:

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<sup>34</sup> Sunshine, Backman & Backman (1995); Geldard & Sinclair (1996)

- access to specific target markets;
- corporate/brand image creation/enhancement;
- awareness of an organisation and/or its services/products;
- product identification with a particular lifestyle;
- relationship building with distribution channel members;
- merchandising opportunities;
- demonstration of product attributes;
- sales generation;
- component of employee reward and recognition systems; and
- maintenance of a climate of consent for an organisation's activities

(Allen et al. 2002: 226 – 227).

Event organisers and managers therefore have to consider how they can offer these benefits to their sponsors. Individual events will, of course, incidentally differ,

but common items include the agreement to purchase products from a sponsor, e.g. alcohol, food; event naming rights; exclusivity (capacity to lock out competition); networking opportunities; merchandising rights; media exposure; signage; advertising in media with sponsor to reinforce the association of the sponsor with the event; the capacity to demonstrate product; hospitality services; and tickets (full price/discounted)

(Allen et al. 2002: 227 – 228).

A festival that has secured sponsorship or funding, has a safeguard against complete failure. It enables them to reduce their ticket prices, “which can lead to greater ticket sales” (Carlsen in Yeoman 2004: 239 – 240). A lower priced ticket will resonate with many young people in South Africa, for financial support often is skimpy in many families.

Clearly a major responsibility lies in the hands of national government in aiding the TYP industry and allowing it to reach its full potential. Their support and authority can enable “partnerships between local government, community interests, the private sector and

individuals” (Derrett in Yeoman 2004: 37). At present government policies are forcing organisers to utilise formulaic frameworks that are restricting instead of enhancing idiosyncratic festivals (Derrett Yeoman 2004: 38). The volatile nature of a youth festival can be protected through their direct involvement “and ... encourage an open attitude to cross-disciplinary work” (Derrett in Yeoman 2004: 38). It is rather apparent that the structural conventions, which relate to the contextual theatricality dimension, are in South Africa more focused on social development than entertainment. Unfortunately TYP practitioners are forced to adhere to these conventions, for it is all that is available to them. This is inhibiting them considerably from utilising the full potential of the TYP form. It is the government’s responsibility to create an environment in which a balance between the educational and entertainment qualities of TYP can be attained and developed. The organisers, on the other hand, are accountable for producing events that appeal to the needs and desires of the youth they wish to involve, and not being solely motivated by personal gain. It indeed is imperative to create and develop a decent relationship between government and TYP practitioners.

In an ideal world TYP practitioners in South Africa would not have to be registered as a non-profit organisation, and be able to receive subsidies and support from government regardless the profits they make. Unfortunately this is the reality of practitioners and organisers in South Africa, as TYP is not allowed to be profitable. A festival organised for young people in South Africa can go either one of two ways to recruit funding: from government and the private sector in order to create an event that will not be profitable, or seeking funding from the private sector alone and be profitable. This places a major onus on organisers, as the profit yielded should not be wasted and should be utilised in order to further the growth and develop the quality of the festival. Ideally, practitioners would also not have to struggle against other art forms in order to get funding, but rather have specified funding structures for TYP. Unfortunately this is not the case and TYP practitioners in South Africa will have to find innovative ways to “sell” their product to the State or semi-private funding bodies mentioned above. Fact remains that either way the final product needs to be of high quality and the content should be relevant to the trends associated with the target audience.

The assurance that a festival is of high quality and contains content that is relevant, appealing and satisfying to its target audience, is solely the responsibility of festival organisers and managers. In the case where a festival is organised by competent professionals that have procured substantial funding for their event, the manner in which they are organised and in which they plan and produce the festival, is of utmost importance to the sustainable success of the event.

### **6.3. MANAGEMENT, the CONCEPTUAL PLANING PROCESSES and ORGANISING the ENVIRONMENT**

This heading mostly pertains to the professional practices that organisers and practitioners undertake in order to create a festival or event for young people in South Africa. With regard to Sauter's model, the crucial aspects to consider, are the artistic, organisational and structural conventions that shape and produce the playing culture of a festival. This dimension can be heavily influenced by the socio-political environment in which it needs to operate. It has been noted previously that TYP practitioners are being inhibited by the lack of focus in government policies and that it has forced them to apply a certain working method with the conventions – in essence leading to the mass production of a single TYP form that is mostly pedagogically orientated. Although other forms are identified in Chapter 5, there is still no evidence of an arts festival being produced with young people as the sole target market. Despite the major focus on education or competition, organisers and practitioners are still able to produce theatrical events (not festivals) that produce a meaningful playing culture environment. Exploring the various ways in which practitioners can operate, should highlight a working method that can be utilised to produce an appealing arts festival for young people.

#### **6.3.1. Management Models and a Festival's Aims and Objectives**

The foremost feature that predetermines the planning process, is constructing the organisational body responsible for planning and producing the festival. A variety of organisational structures exist and these structures are used in a way that best suits “the

scale and level of access to event management expertise” for the various festival models (Allen et al. 2002: 114). A few management models are discussed later in this section. Practitioners, organisers and managers need to decide which model will work best to effectively produce a festival aimed at young people. The ideal festival management model, however, will be one that can integrate young people into the actual managerial and organisational structures of the festival. Young people who are so thoroughly integrated into the contextual theatricality of a festival will, arguably, ensure identification, production of meaning and peak-experiences for other young festival participants.

The organisational body or management board is the component of a festival that conceptualises and devises, executes, and assesses the festival. It will be in the best interest of the festival if the organisational body could demonstrate diversified expertise and faculty, possibly bestowed on one or two people, but they should incorporate “all aspects of event management, marketing, financial management and the law” (Salem, Jones, & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 17).

Integrating young people into these processes and structures will not only allow for a deeper understanding of the target audience market and culture, but also offer educational value to the youths directly involved. In the case of a multifaceted festival, it would be constructive that specific responsibilities be entrusted to subgroups or subcommittees (Salem, Jones, & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 17). Divided organisational and managerial aspects can provide more individual focus on the young people involved and allow them to specialise in a specific area of festival organisation from an early age. If necessary, expert advisers can be employed to perform certain tasks, but fact remains that, in order for an organisational body to be potent and successful, it should function as a team (Salem, Jones, & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 17).

Inevitably the success of a festival or event is determined by how successful the organisers were in “balancing the competing needs and interests of a diverse range of stakeholders” (McDonnell et al. 1999: 39). Companies, organisations and businesses recognise that efficient strategic management of inter-organisational partnerships is

essential for any enterprise to survive, and that durability can be improved especially in times of augmented competition (Robertson & Frew 2008: 123). A festival that integrates young people into their organisational and managerial structures can, arguably, ensure that the festival is highly competitive and artistically grounded in the needs and the desires of the most important stakeholder – the target audience. The managerial structures utilised in this paper were developed by Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell and Harris (2002).

The first managerial structure to be explored, is generally designed for small-scale festivals – very simple in its structure, and aptly named 'the simple structure'. The manager within this structure is responsible for all the processes and "activities associated with the event" (Allen et al. 2002: 114 – 115). Hence the structure "is flexible, adaptable to changing circumstances, easy to understand, and has clear accountability" (Allen et al. 2002: 114). Personnel should be capable of assuming numerous roles and thus have to be multiskilled (Allen et al. 2002: 115). The Programming Unit of the OUT OF THE BOX festival and the former Stage X festival utilises this structure which is able to generate elevated morale amongst staff members, as well as conjure up greater satisfaction for individual jobs (Allen et al. 2002: 115). Clearly it has worked significantly well for the Programming Unit, but only a select few young people will be able to be integrated into the organisational aspects of this management model. This structure also has potential drawbacks: personnel needn't, necessarily be able to accomplish advanced skills; and managerial decisions can grow to be time consuming as the administrative structure develops and grows (Allen et al. 2002: 115). Furthermore, if the manager follows a dictatorial approach, there is a possibility of employees feeling demoralised because their expertise is not being fully utilised (Allen et al. 2002: 115). There is an immanent risk if a single manager administers and regulates all the information (Allen et al. 2002: 115).

The second structure is more functional and is aptly known as the 'functional structure', for it "departmentalises (i.e. groups related tasks) in a way that encourages the specialisation of labour (paid and/or voluntary)" (Allen et al. 2002: 115). The benefit of utilising this management model, is that overlaps of responsibilities can be avoided by allocating "specific task areas" to groups or individuals (Allen et al. 2002: 115). The

structure is moreover capable of including extra duties when the festival needs it (Allen et al. 2002: 115). The primary limitation of this structure is concerned with co-ordination, which relates to groups or individuals lacking insight of other administrative, practical and managerial obligations and can cause “conflict between functional areas, as those performing the tasks attempt to defend what they see as their interests” (Allen et al. 2002: 115). It is possible to inhibit and prevent such issues by, for instance,

employing multiskilling strategies that require the rotation of staff through different functional areas; general staff meetings between the managers/chairs of all functional areas; general staff meetings and communications (such as newsletters) that aim to keep those engaged on the event aware of matters associated with its current status (e.g. budgetary situation, the passing of milestones) (Allen et al. 2002: 115).

The above-mentioned elements are vital for a festival or event manager’s leadership competence, and are examined later in this chapter. Furthermore, with regard to integrating young people into the festival managerial processes, I support a model, unlike this one, that is more co-ordinated amongst various departments.

The third managerial structure is a programme-based matrix structure which can be seen as a further extension of the previous structure. Rather than operating as one system, this structure organises individuals, groups and/or committees that treat the various parts of a festival’s planning and programming processes as separate yet interrelated units (Allen et al. 2002: 116). Each committee or group is assigned a leader, or rather head of department (HOD), who is responsible for managing “a team of people with a comprehensive range of event-related skills” and each group and/or committee has certain tasks to carry out, and is principally responsible for them (Allen et al. 2002: 116). This structure is bound to be very efficient in integrating young people into organising and managing a festival. The HOD appointed to each segment of the festival, will be able to lead each group and guide the young people involved in performing their tasks. The HOD should not necessarily be solely responsible for this task; it would be advisable to appoint assistants to support him/her in allocating and executing tasks alongside the younger apprentices. When utilising this structural form, best practice would be “to have some tasks, such as security, communications and technical support, cut across all



programme areas to prevent duplication and enhance co-ordination” (Allen et al. 2002: 116). The advantage of using this management model, is that it allows individuals and groups to focus their attention and “engage directly with the task at hand (producing and delivering an event) and facilitating intergroup communication and co-operation” (Allen et al. 2002: 117). In order to present a festival or event that uses this model, co-ordination cannot be overestimated (Allen et al. 2002: 117).

Most festival and event management organisations are fairly small, normally fewer than 20 people, but they are able to plan and produce full-size and intricate events (Allen et al. 2002: 117). Management organisations can do this because they solicit the services of numerous other corporations, businesses and organisations (Allen et al. 2002: 117). This is known as the multi-organisational or network structure. It is rather common amongst festival organisers to produce an organisational structure “by contracting outside firms to perform specific functions” (Allen et al. 2002: 117). This model really is effective for producing a festival, for “it is impractical to maintain a large standing staff when they can be used only for a limited period each year” (Allen et al. 2002: 117). There are many advantages when utilising this managerial form: by employing companies that specialise in specific areas, one can be certain that they have their fingers on the pulse, and are familiar with current trends and practical knowledge (Allen et al. 2002: 117); it allows management to accurately calculate the budget over against the costs contracted and agreed upon in advance (Allen et al. 2002: 117). If the central management group is small, they can make immediate and thorough decisions (Allen et al. 2002: 117).

As with the other management structures, there are also a few shortcomings to this model. The major issues relate to “quality control and reliability of supply, as contractors are involved in performing many tasks; and co-ordinating employees, from various other organisations, who lack a detailed understanding of the event” (Allen et al. 2002: 117). Nonetheless, this model is ideally suited for certain types of events, and many modern festival and event managers recommend this concept for organisations considering economising and/or upholding core undertakings and outsourcing (Allen et al. 2002: 117). The core staff should constantly monitor their progress in relation to other departments, by having regular meetings with HODs and the Festival Director. The

organisational team can ensure co-ordination and understanding amongst the numerous segments of the festival.

After examining the various possible management models, as well as considering the manner in which the Programming Unit of the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals worked, it seems the last model would be the most ideal model to implement. This management model will allow festival organisers to approach other potential stakeholders that can contribute to the festival programme. These stakeholders include schools, other TYP companies, tertiary institutions and private contractors specialising in specific fields. Furthermore, sourcing other institutions and stakeholders could inflate the number of young people to be integrated into the organising and managing of a youth festival.

However, funding plays a definitive role in whatever model would be employed. In an ideal world funding for a youth festival would be a long-term affair where the organisers are certain about the availability of funds for each year's festival. Unfortunately, due to the project-based funding system, youth festival organisers will only be able to decide on a management style once the availability of funds is known to them. Another possibility would be that the youth festival is implemented solely by means of sponsorships and revenue; yet, as a start-up company, this will be highly unlikely. However, in relation to the management style of the Programming Unit, it is highly recommended that the organisers of a festival for young people 1) consist of a central group of people who have worked together on other projects, and 2) follow a democratic approach (Seffrin 2006: 129). The latter has to do with the style of human resources management – an essential feature of a successful management model. Human resources management deals with employment, development, and motivating contractors/staff so as to ensure a successful festival (Robertson & Frew 2008: 64).

The proper management of human resources can contribute considerably to ensuring customer satisfaction and, consequently, the success and sustainability of a festival. The festival's employee structure consists of various different categories: "a professional core comprising full-time and part-time permanent and/or temporary staff, supplemented by specialist consultants, and hourly paid staff employed directly by the event or indirectly

through contracts and unpaid volunteers”, as well as young apprentices (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 26). Essentially, employee relations management is more intricate for festivals than any other organisation of leisure activities. In the end the tactics that need to be employed will spring from a preliminary analysis, the elements of which need to be executed by event organisers or “subcontracted to other organisations”, thus giving rise to the “staffing structure and [the] plan for delivery” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 26).

To ensure the successful execution of the festival’s aims, it will be beneficial to break them down into specific objectives. Salem, Jones and Morgan suggest that these objectives should be ‘S.M.A.R.T’, an acronym used to help “identify performance targets for the event which facilitate the later evaluation of the event” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 17). SMART stands for objectives that are: “*Specific* to the event, *Measurable* quantitatively, *Agreed* (or achievable) by those involved, *Realistic* (or relevant) to the resources available, *Timed* around the event schedule” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 17). The SMART technique will complement research into the festival market and ensure that everyone involved in the production of the event will be on the same page. The identified objectives should also be monitored throughout the process to ensure that the organisation stays on track.

A further precaution to be taken by organisers, is to do regular feasibility checks. This will ensure that the objectives of “the event ‘stack up’ and do not need detailed answers”, but only offer a broad indication of possible success or failure (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18). The study of whether the festival will be feasible or not “tends to focus on market research and an initial financial study”. The former will be discussed next (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18).

### **6.3.2. Market Research and the Position of the Audience**

The investigation into the working method of the Programming Unit, i.e. positioning the audience as significant contributors to the content and form of the festival, reveals that a youth festival can be highly successful by utilising a rigorous consultation process.

Festival and event organisers should use market research to promote competent management. Acquiring market research to organise a festival or event “is based on one simple premise: the lower the quality (or, indeed, the complete absence) of data used for marketing decisions, the higher the risk of marketing failure” (Allen et al. 2002: 188). Data that is collected, must preferably be accumulated in “an on-going, organised set of procedures and methods designed to generate, analyse, disseminate, store and later retrieve information for use in making marketing decisions” (Stanton, Miller & Layton 1994: 48).

As noted earlier, it is essential that festival managers recognise stakeholders as integral role-players in the planning process, given the fact that there are disparate elements a festival has to maintain. It is of great importance that organisers enter into a dialogue with and consult all the stakeholders during the conceptual planning phase of the event.

It is no longer sufficient for an event to meet just the needs of its audience. It must also embrace a plethora of other requirements, including government objectives and regulations, media requirements, sponsors’ needs and community expectations (McDonnell, Allen & O’Toole 1999: 39).

The integration of young people into the market research processes as well, will ensure a thorough understanding of the target audiences’ needs and desires. The target audience will essentially be the people doing the research amongst their peers and giving direct feedback to central management regarding the findings.

Contemporary society is driven by information and consumption, and it is clear that “the intense relationships and extreme behaviour patterns that can typify subcultural or ‘fan’ behaviour, have become mainstream” (Robertson & Frew 2008: 21). The latest research reveals that communities with similar interests and behaviour are progressively being formed due to leisure activities rather than geographical location. The increasing use of the internet is responsible for this phenomenon (Robertson & Frew 2008: 21). The immense upsurge in the production of media has made people be even more critical about their preferences and activities (Robertson & Frew 2008: 21). The abundance and variety of leisure pursuits have affected the concept and strategies of customer relationship

management (CRM) used by organisations and businesses, because the perception of an experience economy has increased in value (Robertson & Frew 2008: 21). Owing to this, there is the rising significance of entertainment within the worldwide financial system and the diverse impact of the American culture (Robertson & Frew 2008: 21). Evidently this has produced a culture of consumption, which goes hand in hand with youth popular culture which is preoccupied with cultural consumption.

Research into the target market (as well as other stakeholders) of a festival enhances the possibility of executing the event successfully, as it provides information about “customer characteristics, motivations [and] preferences”, as well as the use of “promotional tools” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18). Market research is of vital importance, as it expedites decision-making and equips festival organisers and managers with insight into possible financial outcomes and assurance that the festivals aims are fulfilled (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18). Market research can impact on “sponsorship decisions, marketing [strategies], venue selection and dates for launching the event” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18). Festival organisers should also determine whether the data needed will come from primary or secondary sources. Secondary data can be sufficient, but it is crucial that it is drawn from suitable and trustworthy sources. Primary data is, of course, best practice, but can be very expensive. Yet, when working with young people it is imperative for execution and evaluation later on.

Primary data is essential for reinforcing prevailing information and giving festival organisers and managers a deeper insight into the immediate environment of customers, competitors, suppliers and the public (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 140). This can be a somewhat expensive and prolonged task; it therefore is important that the research has clear objectives and that the operation is completed reliably “within the given budget and time constraints” (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 140). Preferably the gathering of primary information will be of a quantitative and qualitative nature, as the combination ensures a thorough reading of the geo-economical, socio-political and cultural market (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 140).

Utilising different data sources and types is important, as this will provide festival organisers and managers with relevant, timely and reliable information (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139). The specific aims of the research required by organisers and managers will determine what kind information is needed. The most economical and accessible data that festival organisers need, is found in the daily operation of the organisation itself (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139). According to her, the efficacy of this data “can be greatly enhanced by systematic and consistent report generation using database and query software” (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139). The accumulation of internal data often acts as the foundation for an organisation’s market information system in development; “however, caution is required, as it is easy to become over-reliant on internal data to the neglect of vital external sources” (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139). Internal data can be quantitative and qualitative in nature. Knowledge about “ticket sales, accounts, customer records, costings, merchandise sales, bar sales, etc.” is quantitative data; qualitative data has to do with “sales staff reports, sponsorship bids/feedback, minutes of meetings, feedback from costumer service staff, customer complaints/compliments, etc.” (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139).

Market information collected externally is an essential element in making executive choices. Information gathered from outside sources such as “market intelligence, continuous market scanning and recurrent stakeholder surveys, should be the priority of the event organisation’s information-gathering activities” (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139). External data collection should originate from knowledge that is already at hand. Quantitative secondary data can be derived from various sources such as

government statistics, online data, industry surveys, published market research reports, trade or association data, published financial data, etc.; [sources for] qualitative [secondary data include] news reports/articles, trade journals, other media, competitor sales literature, trade directories, CD-ROMs, websites, etc. (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139).

Qualitative secondary data is also a vital source and can precede proposal documents which are made public (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 139). Organisers should keep an eye on leading external sources to create longitudinal data. This will enable them to “anticipate customer trends, competitor reactions, economic fluctuations, etc.”, all of which are

imperative for prognosis and continuing development and planning decisions (Wood in Yeoman 2004: 140)

The investigation into the Programming Unit's working method in Chapter 4 has revealed that they are able to allow their audience to have a direct impact on the festival experience. The position of the audience producing and consuming their experience, built through a thorough consultation process, significantly informed the programming of the festival. A youth festival in South Africa will benefit significantly from utilising the consultation process of the Programming Unit. The audience will be introduced to possible performances and activities before the festival takes place and be able to comment critically on the aspects they feel appeal to them, those that do not, and those that can be altered. Positioning the audience in such a manner "can be seen to go against the traditional model of the Artistic Director as auteur, and thus creates a very different kind of festival experience for audiences" (Seffrin 2006: 139). It will be impossible for youth festival organisers in South Africa to carry out such a consultation process, but the benefits cannot be denied; it should be implemented in an innovative manner. The only problem will, perhaps, be insufficient funding to pay employees to sustain this continuous process, unless organisers find a very dedicated team to whom the cause is more important than proper compensation, which is not very likely.

The problem can be solved in finding less expensive ways to gather market information. Integrating young people into the processes could result in a significant decrease in the amount of money spent on market research. The most evident avenue to follow would be the internet and social networks. Creating an identity on social networks is an integral part to every company and institution that wish to appeal to young people. The youth festival that creates a Facebook page or Twitter account, will be able to interact with their target audience - as well as receive constant and updated feedback before, during and after the festival. Such feedback can also be utilised to inform, develop and plan the next festival to ensure that a quality experience is maintained. Furthermore, the utilisation of social networks has become an integral part of marketing an event and should undoubtedly be employed. The young apprentices' knowledge of their peers and the market information gathered will also be able to direct the festival director to other

possible resources, e.g. magazines, e-zines and blogs; television series and movies; fashion; music preferences and relevant local musicians to be incorporated into the festival, etc.

The positioning of the audience as both producer and consumer subsequently blurs the boundaries between the various frames and dimensions of the devised model. A shift in structure can result in an even more significant overlap between the contextual theatrical (the institutional and organisational frame) and playing culture dimensions. Due to this overlap the communicative frame or theatrical playing dimension is inevitably also influenced and might lead to a more appealing event and meaningful experience for young participants. The boutique festival is therefore able to utilise both external and internal data to improve their programming and constantly develop the festival. This will allow the boutique festival model to keep abreast of the latest trends and practices of the youth culture, as well as adapt and change with the ever-changing nature of youth culture. This is essential to ensure the longevity of the youth festival and its appeal for young participants.

### **6.3.3. Marketing, Publicity and Public Relations – Building a Brand**

From the previous headings it is clear that, in order to produce a successful marketing campaign, the festival requires experts' knowledge. Festival organisers can either make use of an external contractor, or employ someone within the management staff who demonstrates the proper experience and knowledge. The latter will naturally be the better option in relation to organising a youth festival that adheres to the boutique model. , for it will allow the individual or group involved in market research and marketing to engage with the target audience in a long-term consulting process over, and ensure effective relationship-building with external stakeholders. Getz emphasises the benefits of a marketing approach “that stresses the building of mutually beneficial relationships and the maintenance of competitive advantages” for an organisation (Getz 1997: 250). Whichever way organisers choose to work, there are certain aspects of marketing, publicity and public relations that festival organisers and managers need to bear in mind and utilise in order to successfully build a brand that will ensure on-going participation.



All market research is not always used, but it enables organisers and managers to truly understand their customers' or participants' motivations. There are three imperative objectives to attain when marketing a festival or event: organisers and/or managers should “read their customer needs and motivations, develop products that meet these needs, and build a communication programme which expresses the event's purpose and objectives” (Hall 1992: 136).

In her article *What Really Matters to the Audience: Analysing the Key Factors Contributing to Arts Festival Ticket Purchases* (2011), Karin Botha (et al.) identifies several key factors that contribute to festival participants' purchasing tickets. The findings are based on two Afrikaans festivals, viz. the KKNK and Innibos National Arts Festival. These findings deepen the understanding of the ticket-purchasing market, and “[assist] festival organisers and marketers to plan their marketing strategies accordingly” (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 36). Van Zyl (2011) argues that

[a] festival's success depends largely on marketing and, more specifically, the right marketing mix, followed by communicating the festival, and ultimately positioning and branding the arts festival strategically in the market (Van Zyl in Hauptfleisch 2011: 181 – 182).

Furthermore, Botha states, festival organisers have a tendency to market their festivals unsystematically with no specific focus (Van Zyl in Hauptfleisch 2011: 182). A festival can draw large numbers of people and the ability to catch the attention of the market, is rooted in positioning the festival uniquely in the festival market. This relates to the image or brand the festival elicits in the minds of its potential participants. A potent festival image or brand will markedly single out the said event from other similar events. The proper planning and execution of a festival's marketing mix could ensure that potential customers deem it worthy to participate in.

Utilising a marketing mix is common practice “to attain organisational goals” with which organisers and managers can create value for participants (Getz 1997: 250). McCarthy and Perreault (1987) describe a marketing mix as the various changeable constructs an organisation or company can manipulate to gratify the target market (McCarthy &

Perreault 1987: 5). The variables are well-known: product, price, promotion and place. These changeable constructs will be discussed shortly and compared to the variable factors that influence ticket purchases as identified by Botha et al.

The *product* variable has to do with all the features that determine the eventual composition of a festival or event. The principal feature is the entertainment or leisure activity presented, but other elements are also included in this variable. They are issues such as the

standard of food service, food and beverage facilities, opportunities for social interaction, consumer participation in the event, merchandising, staff interaction with customers and the ‘brand’ image the festival or event enjoys [in] the market (Allen et al. 2002: 164).

Botha et al. identified three factors relating to the product aspect of the marketing mix as those that could contribute to attracting more participants. The first being *production credentials* which was found to be the most important factor contributing to festival ticket purchases (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 36). Production credentials entail the “familiarity and reputation of the actor, cast, artist, or musician; and familiarity and reputation of the playwright, author or composer of the performances” (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 36). It is important that festival organisers and marketers emphasise production credentials at a festival and that the renowned performer or practitioner is promoted well, for the ‘name says it all’ (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 38). Through thorough market research and consultation with the target market, organisers will be able to identify which performers and practitioners most appeal to young people.

The second factor identified by Botha et al., is the overall *festival experience* that relates to the promotion of the festival and its products. The festival experience, according to Botha, is related to aspects such as the “ability [for participants] to schedule shows in advance, sufficient leisure time at hand, atmosphere and spirit experienced at shows, and the festival image and brand” (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 36). The success of the total experience can be further ensured by promoting the festival and making the festival programme public well in advance of the event. Furthermore, by hosting the festival over

a holiday period, its participants can be accommodated at a time when they have adequate leisure time at hand (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 38). This research and that of many others, including this study, make it clear that the “festival’s image and brand must emphasise the atmosphere and spirit associated with the festival and its shows” (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39). Once again the apt selection and promotion of a youth festival brand should be done in accordance with its target market.

The target market will also significantly determine the *festival programming* which is the third factor Botha’s research revealed as a “prominent contributor to [the] demand for the arts/performance” (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 37). According to them the festival programme

must make provision for sufficient shows across the preferred genres (drama, comedy, music theatre and cabaret); as well as careful consideration, planning and synchronisation regarding the timeslots of shows. The festival must include ‘once off’ or ‘special edition’ performances, as these are popular amongst attendees (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39).

Clearly these aspects and the participants’ preferences for particular genres should be revealed during the consultation process with the target audience. It is obvious that considering all these factors concerning the festival programme should guarantee that compilation on the whole is what the consumer wants.

In relation to the youth festival in South Africa, these variables will have to be discussed and determined during the consultation process with the target audience and young apprentices, as well as on the social media platforms utilised.

Another prominent means to promote the festival and attract young people, will be to produce a main event as was done at the Stage X festival. This main event can even be in the form of a small music festival happening over one evening, such as *Kaktus op die Vlakte* at the KKNK which is predominantly aimed at young people. This main event can, in essence, integrate two factors identified by Botha et al. The main event should boast excellent *production credentials*, showcasing some of the best known musicians and/or performers. The main event should also be scheduled at a time suitable to optimise

audience participation, and enhance and promote the *festival experience* for its participants.

The primary objective should ensure that the target audience of the festival is entertained by the experience; that it is of high quality, and that it resonates with their current youth culture trends and practices. Thorough market research will ensure that the festival product appeals to the target market. Finally, it is in the hands of the adult organisers to ensure that harmony is maintained amongst the various performances and activities.

*Price* mostly deals with what participants or consumers believe the festival or event is worth and what they are willing to pay. Customers determine the value of a festival by measuring how potently the festival or event gratifies their needs and desires in comparison with “alternative leisure experiences offered by other events and other leisure service providers” (Allen et al. 2002: 164 – 165). Organisers and managers can negotiate the price and vary it “according to the type of customer... [e.g. family members of participants] or the time of consumption (e.g. discounted price for previews)” (Allen et al. 2002: 165). The youth festival’s negotiation will occur during the consultation processes with target audiences and amongst young apprentices. It is more than likely that the young apprentices can come up with insightful and innovative ways of pricing the festival, for instance a variation in ticket prices in accordance with attending only certain performances or activities. A remarkable insight gained by Botha’s study revealed that the *monetary facets* are the least important of the factors that contribute to consumers’ purchasing tickets (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 38). Yet, in relation to the other aspects influencing ticket purchases, it is not clear how significantly monetary aspects contribute to consumers’ decisions, as little difference between the aspects was found by the research (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 38). Botha et al. (in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39) further state that due to this, “[f]estival organisers and marketers can therefore consider gradual, yet sufficient, increases each year, without the concern of facing too much resistance from the market”. However, by following this strategy festival organisers should ensure that it occurs in conjunction with a strong motivation to cater for the needs of the market as revealed within my study (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39).

*Promotion* is an aspect of utmost importance when young people are the target market, as this is the most perceptible element in the marketing mix. Organisers need to execute the promotion of their festival or event properly so that it does not get lost in the smorgasbords of new media at the fingertips of the young. Young people will only consider purchasing tickets if the method and design of the various marketing communication techniques appeal to them (Allen et al. 2002: 165). The festival should aptly utilise the “marketing communication techniques of advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, some merchandising (for instance T-shirts featuring the event), publicity and public relations, and direct mail” (Allen et al. 2002: 165). The youth festival should consider promoting the event in innovative ways. The use of posters is arguably an out-dated way to reach young people. Botha’s research revealed that utilising advertising media such as billboards and flyers is more expensive and not as effective as using other media recommended in this heading (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39). Social media platforms should be utilised thoroughly. The incentive of winning tickets by sharing the event with friends or taking pictures that resonate with the festival theme could be considered. Currently there has been a significant flare-up in flash mobs – also an effective way to grab the attention of the public. This can also be an effective way to promote the festival at schools and give young people the opportunity to be involved in marketing and in a performance.

The more traditional ways of promoting should also be considered. Festival organisers and managers can integrate the various advertising forms or utilise them individually. These are: print media such as magazines, newspapers, poster and flyers; broadcast media such as television and radio; speciality products such as T-shirts, key rings, hats, etc. (to be worn and handed out by participants and organisers); and mobile platforms such as school buses, teachers’ and organisers’ cars, and trains. Festival organisers and marketers should consider advertising the *production credentials* via the following media: television and radio interviews and/or discussions; television advertisements; and written reviews (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39). It is also strongly recommended, especially in the case of youth festivals, to utilise a festival guide, a festival newspaper as well as a festival website to promote the festival (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39). According to

Botha “these channels are the most prominent media that contribute to the ticket purchases of attendees” (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39). Furthermore, in relation to the *production credentials* discussed earlier, it is advisable that award-winning productions be thoroughly advertised in the above media, as this benefits the image of the festival significantly (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39). This will result in positive word-of-mouth marketing about the quality of productions hosted by the festival (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39)

Advertising is the simplest manner to market a festival or event; it is a very accessible promotional medium for potential participants to engage with as it is recognisable and visible. The contemporary marketing and promotion possibilities are endless, but should essentially resonate with the trends and practices of the target market and be executed in a respectful manner.

*Place* plainly designates the physical environment in which the festival or event takes place, and also places where customers can purchase tickets (Allen et al. 2002: 165). Factors relating to these aspects directly affect participants’ festival experience (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 37). A festival’s image and brand can also be enhanced if the festival facilities are associated with high quality. Furthermore, consumer’s associations of a festival with quality facilities and services will contribute to a feeling of value for money (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch et al. 2011: 39). Botha et al.’s research emphasises that

[s]pecial attention should be given to ensuring that the quality of the venue facilities (sound and visibility during the performance), accessibility to the venues, accessibility of ticketing facilities, as well as the user friendliness of these ticketing systems (Botha et al. in Hauptfleisch 2011: 39)<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> For further reference on these notions relating to *place* refer to: Scheff, J. (1999) and Yoon, Y., Lee, J. & Lee, C. (2010) on venue accessibility; Urrutiaguer, D. (2002) and Tkaczynski, A. & Stokes, R. (2010) on the standard and quality of venue facilities; Smith, K.A (2007) on the accessibility of ticketing systems and services at a festival; Beaven, Z. & Laws, C (2004 & 2007) on the effectiveness and user-friendliness of ticketing systems via the internet; and Borgonovi, F. (2004) on the value-for-money aspect associated with quality facilities.

In the world of new media the virtual spaces can be a decisive selling point for young people to attend the festival or event. Through the advice of young apprentices and the information gathered during the consultation process, the manner in which tickets should be sold online can be determined. The easiest way to distribute tickets, will be to sell them at schools during the day and at specified venues for young adult participants. In relation to the physical environment, the most effective use of space would be to allow young people to take over environments normally closed to them, or to transform the spaces they inhabit daily into something new and unrecognisable. The use of space will also be informed by the information gathered in the consultation process and supervised by the HOD's and festival director.

The festival theme is another indispensable element in marketing an event. It is essential that the physical space resonates, enhances and complements the theme of the festival. The theme needs to symbiotically connect with and be easily "translated into the marketing and promotional mix" in order to make both known (Derrett in Yeoman 2004: 47). It is crucial that the name and theme of the festival or event be transformed efficiently and successfully "into a logo, signage, media, advertising, merchandising, civic design, banners and billboards" (Derrett in Yeoman 2004: 48). This element is, of course, variable and should adapt to the changes that occur in youth cultural trends and practices. The Stage X festival was an excellent example of how the festival theme changed to have kept abreast of youth trends and practices.

Salem, Jones and Morgan (2004) identify advertising, publicity, public relations and merchandising as promotional tactics that contribute to building a brand (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 25). Brand building is essential for the longevity of a festival for young people. The youth festival should have a prominent presence amongst young people in the region in which it is produced. This can only be achieved by ensuring that the festival as a product, its price, the way it is promoted and the space(s) it embodies are on a par with what appeals to young people. The festival should be able to effectively adapt to the changes that occur in youth culture to ensure a long-lasting relationship. This is to be achieved through communicating with the target audience on their terms and integrating them into the organisational and managerial aspect of the festival.

#### **6.3.4. Programming and Budgeting to Stage a Successful Event**

Festivals are different from single theatrical events for several reasons; two of these being that festivals comprise numerous single events brought together as a coherent whole and the fact that the creators of these single events or performances are the ones accountable for them. It is the festival organisers' or managers' job to unite the compilation of disconnected performances. The factors mainly influencing the choice of performances and other activities to be included in the festival, are the programme and the budget.

In relation to the boutique model, the programme will be heavily informed by the needs and desires – determined during the market research process – of the target audience. Ideally, all the wishes of the target audience will be made concrete, but unfortunately that will be a tall order for South African youth festival organisers and managers because of policy and funding constraints, and the diverse nature of the youth in the country. This does not, however, mean that an appealing programme cannot be created. If organisers and managers were to follow the tactics discussed previously, there is still a chance at executing a relevant and identifiable festival for young people. The programme might not be as elaborate and cutting-edge as that of the Stage X or other international youth festivals, but it will still resonate with the young audience and give them a meaningful experience – which is the primary objective. The biggest challenge for youth festival organisers and managers will be to keep within the budget to avoid considerable financial losses.

Budgeting is vital to the planning process of events; it prospectively monitors actions and the final implementation of ideas and objectives. The main principle of budget generation is to give a rough idea of how much it will cost to produce a festival or event. It can be made up of a basic list of estimates and expenses sourced prior to the festival (Carlsen in Yeoman 2004: 239 - 240). Festival organisers and managers can thus “establish the necessary income and possible sources of income” (Carlsen in Yeoman 2004: 240). The most standard sources of income for arts festivals is ticket sales, and a mixture of funding and/or sponsorships (Carlsen in Yeoman 2004: 240). The budgeting procedure will



enable organisers to carefully match the goals of the organisation with the resources necessary to accomplish those goals (Razaq in Yeoman 2004: 274).

Determining the sum of financial resources available for a festival, reveals whether organisers should make slight or significant amendments to the characteristics of the festival. The most significant modification would be with regard to the assortment of festival activities and the desired venues (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18). Generally festival organisers revise ticket prices. According to Yeoman organisers can “minimise wasted time and effort” once they have determined that a festival is financially non-feasible (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18). By this time in the planning phase, organisers should have gathered “enough information to decide whether the event should go ahead to the detailed planning stage” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 18).

Organisers can make use of the information that a budget generates “to communicate responsibilities to individuals who are accountable for a particular segment of the organisation” (Fields & Stansbie in Yeoman 2004: 174). Furthermore, organisers must carefully select the performance outcomes for the various individuals or groups involved in the different subdivisions in order to motivate them to reach their goals within time and budget limitations.

Youth festival organisers and managers can create a successful and meaningful experience for their target audience; the odds might be against them in regard to government support and funds, but with effective research, planning, continuous monitoring and trustworthy relationship-building, it is possible. The final step would be to learn from mistakes made and constantly identify areas that need development. This can only be done after the event has taken place and will be investigated next.

## **6.4. IMPEMETING and EVALUATING the FESTIVAL EXPEREINCE**

This part of the study is not concerned with how festival participants experience a youth festival, as it is out of the range of the research. However, the steps that festival organisers and managers need to take in order to ensure the festival is running smoothly and constantly improving, can be examined. The methods are discussed next.

### **6.4.1. Surveys and Interviews**

The evaluation of a festival should go further than just the economic implications, since the social, cultural and environmental consequences also need careful consideration. (Robertson & Frew 2008: 87). In order to plan a successful arts festival and to justify its use of public funding, evaluation must be central in the planning process, with clear aims and objectives (Robertson & Frew 2008: 100).

Recent developments in best practice for festival management evaluating a festival's impacts should be common practice for organisers and managers (Robertson & Frew 2008: 99). Evaluation has become a fundamental part of the planning process during which "clear aims and objectives [are] stated to enable effective evaluation" (Robertson & Frew 2008: 100). It enables festival organisers to prepare more productively and has become a means for festivals "to justify their use of public funding and demonstrate their accountability to sponsors and other key stakeholders" (Roberson & Frew 2008: 99).

At present arts festivals "carry out evaluation at varying levels of advancement and effectiveness and use a wider range of techniques to evaluate" (Robertson & Frew 2008: 100). There is not much "systematic discussion in the literature" about the implementation of evaluation, but three concerns will be discussed under this heading: "monitoring the event, dealing with contingencies and shutting down activities" (Robertson & Frew 2004: 28).

### *Monitoring event progress*

It will be advantageous to the festival to hold briefing sessions prior to the initial launch “to go over final details, iron out any last minute hitches and confirm any alterations to [the] schedule” (Youell 1994: 11). This will enable the festival to launch a smooth opening with an established administrative intent that recognises vital actions (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 28). These activities must be monitored throughout the duration of the festival to ensure they happen according to set objectives and that reparative actions are in place when and where necessary (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 28). Should set plans be altered, it is imperative to be “communicated effectively to all staff” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 28).

### *Dealing with contingencies*

There are many unpredictable and uncontrollable incidents such as “fire, flood, power failures [or] bomb scares that can cause confusion and lead to a festival’s being postponed and/or cancelled (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 28). Organisers can benefit significantly by taking out insurance, as it “transfers part of the risk” and provides them

with specialist advice on risk management and guarantee[s] financial recompense.

To ensure that problems are solved swiftly and properly, it is vital that organisers train all personnel as well as rehearse solutions (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 28 – 29).

### *Shutting down activities*

After the event physical evidence of the festival needs to virtually vanish, which includes “dismantling and removing the equipment, and cleaning up” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29). It would be useful to set up a timetable to delegate the dismantling and removal of hired gear and equipment such as “sound and lighting systems; mobile toilets [and] temporary stages” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29). Cleaning up involves more than cleaning the venues, “but should extend beyond the event and include the removal, and ideally recycling, of promotional materials and special signage” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29).

### *Evaluation*

After an event organisers should evaluate the outcome and process of the festival. The main reason for evaluating a festival is to improve the experience – a learning curve at it were. Salem, Jones and Morgan (2004) identify six distinct perspectives that are valuable to evaluate: “the event organisation, volunteers and other staff, event sponsors, customers, the host community and environmental considerations” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29).

Determinants for evaluating whether the festival outcomes were accomplished, arise from the initial SMART aims and objectives that the festival organisers, managers and apprentices settled on in the decision phase (Yeoman 2008: 29). Information on the “final profit [and] numbers of tickets sold” only becomes known after an event.

In order to evaluate the festival processes, organisers need the views of personnel as well as participants. Using focus groups as a means of debriefing staff and apprentices is a constructive way of gathering information. Employees can simply be requested to reflect on the festival experience; Youell suggests the use of records such as video footage, photographs and media coverage to facilitate a discussion (Youell: 1994: 112). There are numerous methods to acquire information on participants’ festival experience. The informal way would be to ask them to comment and air their complaints and suggestions (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29). The information can be acquired effectively and easily by making use of social media platforms. The more formal methods include “questionnaire surveys providing data on customer profiles [and their] motives for attending and spending patterns” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29). To gain detailed insight into participants’ festival experience, organisers should consider conducting interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews and focus groups can also be recorded to ensure that the information is captured and more accessible for future reference.

After data collation and analysis a formal evaluation session is invaluable for event managers to ‘constantly learn, and improve management’ (Getz, 1997: 331). In this session all stages of the process must be reviewed, including the initial objectives, e.g. for

ticket sales or profits which may not have been achieved (because they were not feasible or for other reasons), the promotional campaign running late, etc. However, evaluation can also be used to enhance activities that were successful during the event” (Salem, Jones & Morgan in Yeoman 2004: 29 – 30). The essential objective of evaluating the festival processes and experience, is improvement. The knowledge gained is invaluable to ensure that a youth festival is constantly being developed and fine-tuned to meet the needs and desires of the young participants.

## **6.5. CONCLUSION**

Theatrical events and festivals are essentially activities that relate to their environments. In this chapter the multi-faceted nature of this environment and how the various aspects can influence and impact one another were examined. Ideally the structures and processes involved will support the production of the entire scope of TYP productions, from the most educational to the predominantly entertaining. Unfortunately this is not the case in South Africa, as there are major imbalances in the national infrastructure of the theatrical arts – the most significant contributor being the cultural context where there is a clear lack of understanding from government about the socio-political, cultural and economic impact festivals can offer our society’s young citizens.

A symbiotic relationship needs to be “established between the greater visions of the politicians and the immediate needs of the organisers” (Sauter 2007: 216). Government has to come to terms with the fact that national prestige and identity is not achieved by their decisions alone, but from the confirmation of the cultural playing field as well as the contextual theatrical dimensions or management of a festival (Sauter 2007: 216). The symbiotic relationship is primarily concerned with money, but the objective is not solely economic revenue – it is about the implicit values of prestige and identity (Sauter 2007: 216). Youth festival organisers might be using public money to produce a festival, but in the process they enhance the prestige of all the stakeholders involved in the playing culture – this includes government, organisers and other relevant organisations, as well as the young festival participants (Sauter 2007: 216).

Producing a relevant programme is the fundamental element that “provides the structure for the individual and collective experience of the participants” (Sauter 2007: 216). Everyone and everything essentially connect to the theatrical experience of a festival with and through multiple identities, the most important aspect being the young people as producers and consumers of their own experience simultaneously (Sauter 2007: 216). Ultimately it is the values that young people can attach to this lived experience that shape the playing culture of a youth festival, and effectively create “a sense of community and participation” (Sauter 2007: 216). These values discussed were in previous chapters and pertain to aspects such as identity, community, problem solving, agreeing to disagree, emotional and psychological development, morality, etc.

Other values of the festival experience that relate to the organisational structure of the contextual theatricality, are the aesthetic and educational which possible stakeholders should realise are a crucial “investment in the future integration of theatrical life in South Africa” (Sauter 2007: 216). It is clear that these “values are not inscribed in one particular element of the theatrical event alone, but emanate from the links between such aspects” (Sauter 2007: 217). Allowing young people to share this experience with one another demonstrates the significant position a festival holds in the playing culture of an entire society (Sauter 2007: 217). To conclude, these values entail “aesthetics and education, along with the sense of community, professional identities, demonstrations of power and prestige, informative and comparative functions, and, above all, the wide range of socialising” (Sauter 2007: 217).

It goes without saying that each individual experiences a festival differently and thus treasures different values and undergoes different degrees of awareness of them over time (Sauter 2007: 217). Fact remains that all the values are present during a festival, and the “density and temporal extension of the event heightens the awareness, and displays the multitude of the experienced values” (Sauter 2007: 217). It is this state of mind, as Sauter claims, that is “most likely the key feature of festival culture, even seen from a global perspective” (Sauter 2007: 217).

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION – Deductions, Shortcomings and Recommendations

#### 7.1 DEDUCTIONS

The primary concern before this research was embarked on, was the dramatically declining number of young people attending the theatre, and that there might not be educated audiences in the future to attend and enjoy theatre performances. My peers prefer less elitist and more accessible forms of entertainment such as films and social gatherings. I thought that I had to change young people's perception of theatre, and that this perception had been cultivated from a very young age. Not every young person enjoyed theatre as much as I do or was ever involved in it. I thus looked into what theatrical performances in the Western Cape region were specially produced for young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years and identified that there is a definite need to develop the current practices of TYP in this region. The important question, though, was: What theatrical form will appeal to young people and attract them to the performative arts, a form that would be able to encompass the vast and complicated phenomenon of youth culture?

The study, firstly, sought to identify the numerous elements that are at play in producing a theatrical event and festival (Chapters 2 and 3). It systematically identified the various characteristics that form a theatrical event and investigated the numerous processes and structures that are in place to produce theatrical events. The investigation found that the societal and managerial structures that produce theatrical events are very similar for festivals – it is only the attendees' experience of theatrical events and festivals that differs. Chapter 2 identified the manner in which theatre makers and audience members experience theatrical events, but the main focus was on the audience's experience. The experience of the playing culture and theatrical playing dimensions during a festival can be highly enhanced through organisers' thorough and democratic communication with participants. It was found that theatrical events and festivals are dynamic entities with their features all influencing each other, depending on the power exerted from a specific

dimension. Evidently, theatre is an art form that relates to its environment and is shaped by its cultural context. The study examined the multi-faceted nature of festivals and explored the relationship between all the elements through various methodologies.

By utilising the many theatrical event and festivalisation methodologies, the study was able to formulate a devised investigative model with which to examine the trends and practices of international TYP events and the local environment. Chapter 4 examined a novel festival form, viz. the boutique festival form, and specifically the implementation of this form in Australia's Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX youth festivals. Chapter 5 utilised the investigative model to examine the current trends and practices of the South African TYP industry. The investigative model enabled the study to compare successful festival events with the current state of TYP in the Western Cape, thus highlighting the shortcomings of the local industry, as well as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of each industry. The first and obvious conclusion that South Africa's TYP industry is deficient, was the fact that there is no festival that could be compared to the Stage X or OUT THE BOX festivals. This becomes very clear when considering the cultural shifts that have been taking place in South Africa the past few decades. The cultural contexts of South Africa and Australia are not the same, but the structures used in Australia give an indication of how a boutique festival can operate in a community. Then followed a systematic investigation that compared the local industry and Australia's different elements that produced the Stage X festival in order to pinpoint the deficiencies of South Africa's approaches .

The first and most striking discovery was the significant support the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX festivals received from the Australian government. Not only were the festivals supported by specific government policies and funding, but the organisers are formed as a governmental statutory board as well. In South Africa the situation is different, as government's policies do not even specify theatre in their funding structures. Furthermore, the events and festivals can only receive funding if they serve the government's policy of social development – and not entertainment. The impact this has on the TYP industry in South Africa, is that most of the events produced are pedagogic in nature. The magnitude of events produced with mostly educational characteristics



outweighs events created that seek to entertain young people. It is evident that the South African government, and perhaps TYP practitioners as well, lack a clear understanding of the TYP form, and that a symbiosis needs to be established between the educational and entertainment components to ensure that the TYP industry does not stagnate. The impact of a government's support is enormous and can either inhibit or facilitate the techniques theatre practitioners use to produce shows and earn a living.

The investigation revealed that the people involved and the structures that need to be in place, are of little worth unless a common objective and symbiotic relationship are achieved amongst the various stakeholders – imbalances equals stagnation and/or failure. Clearly the cohesive relationship between the Australian government and its theatre practitioners enables the country to sustain a healthy TYP industry and ensure its constant cultivation and development. From the examples in Chapter 4 the study could identify the artistic, organisational and institutional features of the contextual theatrical dimension the organisers of the Stage X and OUT OF THE BOX FESTIVAL used. The vital feature of the Programming Unit's management model is the fact that the organisers utilise a flat management style, one that is more democratised than most other festival management models. The example set by this management model is an essential element to utilise when organising a festival for young people in South Africa. A further benefit will be to use a group of people who have worked together for many years and have expert knowledge about youth arts theory and festival management.

Due to the support of the Australian government, the Programming Unit is able to focus on the way in which they produce their events. The management model utilises the boutique festival form which can be seen as a hybridisation of the major and community arts festival models. The fundamental characteristics of this model are the positioning of the audience as both producer and consumer of their festival experience and the organisers' focus on keeping the event prestigious. The Programming Unit undertakes rigorous market research and supplements this research by directly communicating and consulting with the target audience about their social and cultural preferences. Thus the consultation process enables the target audience to shape their own festival experience in the pre-production phase of the festival. Through the organisers' expertise and guidance

the young audiences' thoughts, ideas, preferences and suggestions are arranged to ensure a festival of high quality. Arguably the chances of a young participant being engulfed by the 'flow' experience of the festival, one that has significant meaning to him/her, is more likely to occur than with any other festival model being utilised.

The most unfortunate aspect of the South African TYP industry, is the fact that practitioners have to produce performances and events without decent support from the government and other funding bodies. The constrictive circumstances have forced South African practitioners to produce far from ideal events and a significant stagnation of the industry. The TYP forms that are produced, only reach a certain youth demographic and do not necessarily appeal to their needs and desires, thus forming appalling rather than appealing ideologies amongst young people. Investigating the current state of TYP practices in South Africa revealed that most productions are dominated by adults' ideologies. There are a few examples of events in which young people can participate, for example regional drama competitions or initiatives implemented by major arts festivals. Yet these examples only reach a small demographic of young people in South Africa. The positive aspect of these events is that they can act as a basis to start cultivating TYP as a form with its own set of rules and developing its own trends and practices.

Evidently organisers and audience members alike are influenced by the position of government and its funding policies. The ripple effect of inadequate policies and a lack of understanding of people in power are obvious. The young people of South Africa are being withheld from experiencing the full potential of TYP events. The findings gathered from comparing the international trends and practices with the local environment facilitated the study to produce a festival model that can be implemented to produce a festival aimed at young people within the challenging environment of South Africa. It was revealed that the possibility of creating a festival aimed at young people in South Africa is very likely, yet there are significant challenges practitioners need to face. The most significant challenge is that organisers and practitioners need to find a way in which to promote a festival as a social development tool in order to acquire proper funding from government. There are obviously many competent practitioners in the country who can be brought together to form a management board to produce the festival. The manner in

which they need to plan and execute the festival needs to adhere to youth arts theory notions by considering its target audience as proficient cultural contributors. The impact this can have on the society in which the festival takes place, is remarkable. Ultimately a balanced TYP industry focusing on edutainment holds many benefits for young people – psychological, emotional, skill-training, cultural, intellectual and pure enjoyment, to name but a few.

## **7.2 SHORTCOMINGS**

The most prominent shortcoming of this study was that little practical research was done and implemented into the research. It is an important factor to thoroughly research young people's own experiences of events and festivals in which they participate. I predominantly had informal discussions with participants of events and festivals to try and understand their experiences. Through interviews, surveys and/or focus groups the research could come to a deeper understanding of the needs and desires of current theatre-going youths. The scope of such research is beyond the aims of this study, but, as this can be deemed a shortcoming in the study, it can also be seen as an aspect that was identified as a field for possible further research.

TYP organisers and practitioners could also have been approached in a more structured manner, as casual conversations about the industry and its shortcomings only led to the same conclusion every time – the lack of proper funding. If the research interviewed organisers and practitioners more rigorously, perhaps a proposition or possible solution to the current problems could have been agreed upon. This shortcoming does not, however, deter from the validity of this theoretical exploration. The interviews and possible quantitative research ask for different methods of research that was not the primary focus of this particular study. It is recommended that this type of research should be conducted to move away from pragmatics to a more concrete type of recommendations that could be established and implemented. A broader scope of investigation to a national scale would have yielded more thorough results on to the true nature of TYP in South Africa.

### **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

An essential recommendation that can be made, is that more research, specifically focusing on the cultural and leisure activity needs of young people in South Africa, needs to be conducted. It is possible that young people may not regard theatre as a form of entertainment, but a thorough investigation can also reveal why this perception is present amongst the youth. Practitioners can utilise this information to deepen their understanding and consequently adapt their audience development tactics.

On a practical note, practitioners and organisers should throw caution to the wind and just produce events and festivals for young people. This is the only way in which a deeper understanding can be gained about the youth as a market, and what challenges need to be faced. Confront and address weaknesses and develop and capitalise on strengths and opportunities.

Yet, in order to do so, the issue of finding proper funding also needs to be addressed and investigated. This, in turn, could change government's perception of theatre and theatre for young people, and be the start of cultivating a healthy environment for the performative arts in South Africa.

### **7.4 CONCLUSIVE THOUGHTS**

In the end I believe that with a dedicated and enthusiastic management team the possibility of creating a successful festival for young people is highly likely. By facing the challenges of finding proper funding and starting a dialogue with a possible target audience, the first steps to creating a festival will commence. The research clearly reveals that practitioners with the right attitude are needed in order to produce an event of high-quality. Thus with the right team the restrictions surrounding funding and government policies can be overcome. It would be a wise decision to utilise current platforms of TYP and integrating them into a youth festival so that the maturation of the TYP industry in South Africa can be underway. The magnitude of the festival may not be

like that of the Stage X or OUT OF THE BOX festivals in Australia from the get-go, but, with determination and endurance, I strongly believe that it is possible to create such an event in South Africa. Producing and sustaining a youth festival will ultimately result in a theatre-going culture and lead to integrating young people into the cultural development of South Africa.

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